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SKETCHES ON THE OLD ROAD THROUGH FRANCE TO FLORENCE

34

OLD HOUSES IN CHINON

Frontispiece

SKETCHES ON THE OLD ROAD THROUGH FRANCE TO FLORENCE

BY A. H. HALLAM MURRAY
ACCOMPANIED BY
HENRY W. NEVINSON AND
MONTGOMERY CARMICHAEL

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG all the names of English wild flowers there is none prettier than Traveller's Joy. I do not know why the wild little clematis should have been called so, or who were the poets and humourists that invented the names of our flowers—names like Heartsease, Shepherd's Purse, Love in a Mist, or Blowsy Bess. Such names seem to belong naturally to the kind of England that Chaucer knew, and nowadays they are in danger of being used with a certain conscious and deliberate simplicity, like a revived Maypole in Islington. But Traveller's Joy we may perhaps retain in common use without affectation—all the more because, when summer goes, it loses its childlike prettiness and develops into Old Man's Beard.

Some kinds of traveller's joy are common to every journey. To all except very distinguished people, there is a sense of escape, a loosening of habit's fetters, and a pleasing loss of identity. There is always the hope that the people and things we may meet will be more agreeable than the people and things we are accustomed to. There is the still more glorious hope that the traveller himself may become more agreeable also. And behind

such hopes lie all the inherited joys of nomad life —the uncertainty of the next night, the sense of space and air, the natural divisions of light and darkness, the exposure to the sun and wind and rain—upon which things perhaps too much has been said of late ; for the less said the less spoiled, and fruits eaten in secret are the sweetest.

But beside all these universal joys, each part of the world affords to the traveller a special joy of its own. Spain gives him the joy of indifference to success ; Morocco of adventurous captivity ; Greece of perfection's epitaph ; Albania of picturesque death. Since railways were run up her mountains, and her streams were collected into iron pipes, the joy of Switzerland lies in her toy houses and farmyards. The joy of Germany lies in her Christmas-trees and soldiers. The joy of Crete is the sight of a wild goat at evening. The joy of Turkey is the muezzin's cry from a village minaret at dawn. In South Africa, joy comes in the cool hour before sunrise when the sixteen oxen tug at the chain one after another, and the waggon begins to move across the veldt. In Mozambique it came to me when a brown savage, with tufts of bluejay feathers on his breast, a leopard skin round his loins, and a six-penny looking-glass lashed to his arm, sprang from the train and went bounding into the forest to seek his bride.

But in France and Italy, through which countries our present journey runs, the traveller's joy lies chiefly in association. Both are countries of long and splendid history. One possesses a longer

history of continuous interest and influence than any other country of the world. The other stands only second to her. Both have excelled in the beautiful arts. Both have produced examples of the literature which lasts. Both have known romance and chivalry. Both have fought and suffered for the cause of freedom, and both have given to the world men and women of gracious and courageous temper—the sort of men and women who preserve the value of life among mankind. In two countries like these, it is naturally of such splendid achievements and attractive people that the traveller thinks most.

Or perhaps I ought to say, it is of such things that some travellers think most. For it is a quality of traveller's joy that it is never the same for any two people alike, and I have known one great traveller whose joy consisted in counting the columns of ruins and seeing if their numbers tallied with the guide-book. Nor has the same traveller always the same joy, and it frequently happens that the living flow of a river, or the living look of a peasant counts for more than any wealth of historic or other association that may lie hidden behind them both. Descriptions of the same country written by two different travellers usually read like accounts of two separate stars, and the same man may make the same journey on two successive days and find the difference of a hemisphere between.

So, in looking through this book of travel, composed by various hands, people will not expect to find the same mood prevailing from end to end. A

great part of traveller's joy is variety, and to those who follow us on a journey through well-known lands, variety should also have a charm. But in one thing we are alike: we are all treading an old road, full of ancient and noble associations, in affection for which we are united. Our road passes through lands which have seen generations of the ghosts of time, and every step we take is haunted by their voices. It is sometimes hard to realise that to them life was once as sweet and as uncertain as it is to us, or to estimate how far they were like ourselves, and how they differed. But the lands have not changed very much in their outward form, and as to the ghosts, we may judge from their words that they were at heart something the same kind of people as our own ghosts are now. Else we should not understand them so well.

I should like to add a word about the pictures. Mr. Hallam Murray's work is, I think, conspicuously marked by that sense of association which counts for so much in countries like these. He not only represents the actual beauty which is to some extent visible to any one who can perceive beauty at all; he hints at something that lurks behind the visible beauty. In buildings and landscape he feels for the long story of all those human hopes and sufferings and high endeavours—a story heard in whispers, and only by those who know that its voice is there. But throughout his work he has been inevitably confronted by the technical and mechanical difficulties of the reproduction. An artist's work can never be reproduced, for some

DIEPPE, FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CASTLE

A PICTURESQUE object with its group of quaint cone-headed towers and its drawbridge spanning a chasm which runs down to the sea. Within these walls Henry IV., retreating before the army of the League, found shelter.

Plate 2

touch of personality is quite certain to vanish. Remarkable as are the results obtained by a "process," the very best method must lose something of the artist's delicacy, something of the gradation and undertone which to the artist himself were, perhaps, the true traveller's joy. Excellent as these reproductions are in nearly every case, I who have known the originals, could take them as a text to show how vain is the attempt of every mechanism to imitate or compete against the ancient labour of the hand.

H. W. N.

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NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

THE coloured illustrations in this book have been reproduced by Messrs. André and Sleigh's latest development of the photographic three-colour process, and, to avoid the disagreeable effect of the highly burnished papers usually employed for the purpose, as many as possible of the plates have been printed on a specially prepared plate paper, which it is hoped will be found to produce a pleasanter effect.

A few words to explain the process may be of interest to those who are not conversant with it.

The three colours used are the primary spectrum colours of light, roughly described and represented in pigments by the colours yellow, red and blue. Each colour is printed from a separate block rendering one of the above colours, and the result of printing the three blocks, accurately superimposed one over the other, gives an approximate facsimile of the drawing, no matter how many colours may have been employed in the original.

To obtain the correct analysis of colour by this process, the drawings are highly illuminated by means of a pure white arc light, and are then photographed through screens or light-filters on photographic plates specially sensitised to receive only the separate colours required.

The light-filter for the yellow colour sensation is a spectroscopically prepared violet-tinted glass, which permits the blues and reds of the picture to affect the photographic plate, leaving the yellows to appear as shadows on the negative, and giving as a result on the finished plate the yellow and its combinations as the darkest portions of the picture.

The light-filter for the red plate is coloured green, which allows the blue and yellow to affect the negative, and in consequence the red passages of the original are separately recorded.

The filter for the blue is tinted orange-red, permitting the yellows and reds to act on the sensitive plate, and recording the blue sensation only as the strongest part of the picture.

From the negatives thus obtained, blocks on copper are etched by the half-tone process (similar to the blocks used in most modern books for black and white illustration); the engraving of these colour blocks, however, requires careful treatment and revision from the hands of skilled artists to ensure the accurate adjustment of colour before they are ready for the press.

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NARBONNE—*continued.*
long row of washerwomen on their knees on the edge of the canal, pounding and wringing the dirty linen of Narbonne."—*Henry James* 62

17—NÎMES, ROMAN BATHS, now part of the Public Gardens, laid out in the time of Louis XIV. "The sacred spring in the garden still fills the Roman baths to the brim with clear water. Here in these curving pools the men used to bathe" (p. 65) 66

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19—BEAUCAIRE, TWELFTH-CENTURY CASTLE, an ancient possession of the Counts of Toulouse, the scene of the Romance of "Aucassin and Nicolette." It was in this castle of Beaucaire that Nicolette was imprisoned that May night when she thought upon her lover. "Then she arose and put on a mantle of silk she had by her. . . . She came to the garden gate and unbarred it, and went through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping always on the shadowy side, for the moon was shining clear, and so she wandered till she came to the tower where her lover lay." 78

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21—AIX-EN-PROVENCE, ROMANESQUE ARCH IN THE ANCIENT CATHEDRAL OF ST. SAUVEUR, 1103. "Said to have been built on part of the Temple of Apollo

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AIX-EN-PROVENCE—*continued.*
in the first settlement of the Romans in Gaul."—*Macgibbon.* "Aix is another of the troubadour towns. The cathedral and other buildings are strewn with relics of every style, from Corinthian days down to architecture's latest gasp" (p. 85) 84

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23—THE ROCK-BUILT TOWN OF MONACO, the smallest Principality in Europe, surrounded by the fortifications erected by Louis XIV. Evelyn says: "We sailed by Monqus, now cal'ed Monaco, when, ariving after the gates were shut, we were forc'd to abide all night in the barg which was put into the haven, the wind coming contrary. In the morning we were hasted away, having no time permitted us by our avaricious master to go up and see this strong and considerable place: the situation is on a promontory of solid stone and rock. The tower walls verey fayre. We were told that within it was an ample Court and a Palace" 90

24—CANNES AND THE ESTÉREL MOUNTAINS. "The fortified hill-towns were the chief characteristic of the Riviera. . . . Even Cannes and Nice and Mentone were once only hill-towns for defence. . . . All towns built on hills are beautiful, but, outside Italy herself, there are none more beautiful than these until we reach the land of the Turk" (p. 85) 92

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26—SAN REMO. The old town is "a mass of streets placed close above each other, and linked together with arms and arches of solid masonry, as a protection from the earthquakes which are frequent at San Remo. The walls are tall, and form a labyrinth of gloomy passages and treacherous blind alleys, where the Moors of old might meet with a ferocious welcome."—*J. A. Symonds* 104

27—ALBENGA, CATHEDRAL TOWER AND BAPTISTERY. "Architecturally speaking, the most interesting town on this part of the coast. The general view of the town shows the peculiar preponderance of square towers, for which it is remarkable. On closer inspection these are found to be no less surprising than when seen from a distance. That over the North entrance to the church has a strong resemblance to the campaniles of Lombardy, such as that of Mantua, and is thoroughly Italian in every detail. The very interesting baptistery is of octagonal form."—*Macgibbon* 108

28—GENOA, LIGHTHOUSE. Very little seems to be known of the history of the "tall, slender, graceful lighthouse which shoots up from its rocky promontory far into the Ligurian sky" (p. 113) 114

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30—THE CARRARA MOUNTAINS FROM THE SEA-COAST. "The sand dunes stretch for miles between the sea and a low wood of stone-pines, with the Carrara hills descending from their glittering pinnacles by long lines to the headlands of the Spezzian Gulf. The immeasurable distance was all painted in sky blue and amethist, then came the golden green of the dwarf firs; then dry yellow in the grasses of the dunes; and then the many-tinted sea with surf tossed up against the furthest cliffs."—*J. A. Symonds* 144

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31—PIETRASANTA. "It is at Pietrasanta that the Tuscan, or lover of Tuscany, after exile north of the river Magra, first feels that he is at home once more. It is not an old town, as Italian towns go: it was built in the thirteenth century . . . an isolated bit of Florentine territory hemmed in by enemies" (p. 157) 160

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33—THE SEA-COAST NORTH OF VIAREGGIO. Near the spot where Shelley's body was cremated, August 18, 1828. "The situation was well calculated for a poet's grave. In front was a magnificent extent of the blue and windless Mediterranean—on the other side, an almost boundless extent of sandy wilderness here and there interspersed in tufts with underwood, curved by the sea breeze. . . . This view was bounded by an immense extent of the Italian Alps, which are here particularly picturesque from their volcanic and manifold appearances."—*Medwin*. 188

34—CAMAJORE. "A picturesque little rectangular town, retaining much of its mediæval fortifications and several gates." 208

35—PISA FROM OUTSIDE THE WALLS. "A small city, with a tower leaning at one end of it, trees on either side, and blue mountains for the background. . . . Add to this, in summer time, fields of corn on all sides, bordered with hedgerow trees, and the festoons of vines, hanging from tree to tree."—*Leigh Hunt* (from p. 220) . . 220

36—PISA, TORRE GUELFA. Shelley took his inspiration for his "Tower of Famine" from the Torre Guelfa, which Medwin records, describing thus: "Follow the graceful curve of the palaces on the Lung 'Arno, till the arch is naved by the massy dungeon tower frowning in dark relief" (p. 231) 228

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37—VENICE, SAN GIORGIO. "A building which owes its interesting effect chiefly to its isolated position, being seen over a great space of lagoon. The traveller should especially notice in its façade the manner in which the central Renaissance architects (of whose style this church is a renowned example) endeavoured to fit the laws they had established to the requirements of their age."—*Ruskin* . 232

38—FLORENCE FROM THE BOBOLI GARDENS, LOOKING TOWARDS FIESOLE. "The garden of Boboli lies behind the Grand Duke's palace, stretched out on the side of a mountain. I ascended terrace after terrace, robed by a thick underwood of bay and myrtle, and looked up to the cypress groves which spring above the thickets . . . a winding path led me to a green platform overlooking the whole extent of wood, with Florence deep beneath, and the tops of the hills which encircle it jagged with pines, and here and there a convent or villa whitening in the sun."—*Beckford's Letters* . 236

39—FLORENCE, PONTE VECCHIO. "The Bridge *par excellence; il ponte*, or *il passo d'Arno*, as Dante calls it. More than a mere bridge over a river, this Ponte Vecchio is a link in the chain binding Florence to the Eternal City. A Roman bridge stood here of old . . . and possibly lasted down to the great inundation of 1333. The present structure, erected by Taddeo Gaddi after 1360, with its exquisite framed pictures of the river and city in the centre, is one of the most characteristic bits of old Florence still remaining."—*Edmund Gardner* 256

40—FLORENCE, THE MERCATO VECCHIO (now destroyed). "A broad piazza, known to the elder Florentine writers as the Mercato Vecchio. This piazza, though the scene of a provision market from time immemorial, had not been shunned as a place of residence by Florentine wealth. In the early decades of the fifteenth century, the Medici and other powerful families had their houses there. . . . And high on a pillar in the centre of the place, a venerable pillar, fetched from the Church of San Giovanni, stood Donatello's stone statue of Plenty, with a fountain near it, where, says old Pucci, the good

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FLORENCE, THE MERCATO VECCHIO—*continued.*
wives of the market freshened their utensils and their throats also."—*Romola* 264

41—FLORENCE, INTERIOR OF THE DUOMO DURING THE LENTEN PREACHING. "When Baldassare pushed behind the curtain and saw the interior of the Duomo before him, he gave a start of astonishment, and stood still before the doorway. He had expected to see a vast nave empty of everything except lifeless emblems, with perhaps a few worshippers in the distant choir following a monotonous chant, and he saw instead a vast multitude of warm living faces upturned in breathless silence towards the pulpit."—*Romola* 268

42—FLORENCE, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM SAN DOMENICO AFTER A FALL OF SNOW
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44—FLORENCE FROM THE OLIVE GARDENS OF SAN DOMENICO. "In our wanderings amongst the gardens and olive grounds we used to be joined by the children of Walter Savage Landor, who was at that time residing with his wife and family in a villa near Fiesole. A more joyous and happy company of children than we formed could not well be imagined. Even at that early age. . . . I was never tired, stretched under the shadow of an olive-tree, of contemplating the glorious view of Florence beneath, with the majestic cupola of Brunelleschi and the graceful campanile of Giotto rising above the city."—*A. Henry Layard* 278

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45—FLORENCE FROM POGGIO GHERARDO. "I love Florence—the place looks exquisitely beautiful in its garden-ground of vineyard and olive-trees sung round by the nightingales day and night. If you take one thing with another, there is no place in the world like Florence, I am persuaded, for a place to live in."—*E. B. Browning* 280

46—FLORENCE, VIEW ACROSS THE PLAIN TO THE HILLS.

"The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and the sky doth lay;
But when night comes a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm."—*Shelley* 282

47—VALLOMBROSA, MONASTERY. "Should you be in Florence in the summer, visit Vallombrosa, one of the greatest natural curiosities in Tuscany, though Milton mentions only an ordinary circumstance, that of the fall of the leaves in autumn. You will be astonished the whole way at the boldness of the scenery:—and not least, at the mountain itself which looks proudly down on all that surrounds it. San Giovanni Gualberto (985) founded the convent in the midst of woods on the top of the Apennines, inhabited by wolves and bears; it has now become one of the pleasantest spots in Tuscany. A forest of chestnuts leads you to a forest of firs, and you at length arrive at the convent, situated on a delightful lawn, enclosed in an amphitheatre of wood."—*Beckford Letters* . 288

48—THE ALPS FROM VERONA. "The strange sweeping loop formed by the junction of the Alps and Apennines [encloses] . . . the great basin of Lombardy. . . . All the torrents which descend from the southern slope of the High Alps and from the northern slope of the Apennines meet concentrically in the recess or mountain bay which the two ridges enclose; every fragment which thunder breaks out of their battlements, and every grain of dust which the summer rain washes from their pastures is at last laid at rest in the blue sweep of the Lombardic plain."—*Ruskin* 308

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Florence
Vallombrosa
MEDITERRANEAN

PART I

BY HENRY W. NEVINSON

CHAPTER I

THE LAND OF PIRATES

THE right way of entering any country is to slide into it through a river's mouth. No doubt it is easiest to reach Normandy at Dieppe, but the streams of Béthune and Arques barely suffice for the basin of a port, and without having time even to learn that at the west end of the town stands a typical French castle, you are confusedly hurried away to Rouen in a train, as it were by the back door.

Instead of being plumped down like a merchant with his bales upon an indistinguishable platform, let us rather, as becomes the descendants of so many pirates, follow the ships of Rou, and steal quietly and gradually into the heart of the land by that river road where Harfleur and Honfleur still act as water-towers at the entrance gate, and within their portal the long, straight hills of Normandy break in cliffs down to the Seine.

Ridge beyond ridge those hills stand, one behind the other, till they are lost in thin grey, and between them the river comes winding down from that Côte d'Or, which looks to Jura and bears upon its gentle slopes just the very best vines of all the world. With it the river brings waters that have made the

Marne, the Oise, and the Yonne—waters that have seen the ancient towns and great churches of Beauvais, Laon, Rheims, Châlons, and Sens—brimming streams that appear so slow and quiet till you watch or feel the eddying current in their depth. It is a great course of history through which they have flowed since the distant years when it depended on the turn of a hair whether their part of France should not be Germany, and I sometimes think their happiness in remaining French has ever since given to their waters a peculiar radiance.

No wonder the pirates chose this river road, whether they came seeking history, architecture, sweet dispositions, or wine. But the thought of them fills me with puzzles. There are so many questions one would like to ask the learned about those piratical predecessors of ourselves. I even want to know where they came from. Somebody has told me they had round heads, but that is no help. Yet it makes all the difference whether they started from the rocks of Norway where the sea always booms and crashes, or from green Danish shores where the sea only gurgles, or from Friesland flats where it sucks and slobbers over the muddy sand. And I want to know whether they fixed their port and came for conquest prepense, or sailed at large for any luck. And I want to know whether they really brought horses in open boats with their heads hanging over the sides in rows, as we see in Tapestry; and if so, what percentage of horses leapt ashore alive. And I want to know

what was eaten on the voyage, and whether the warriors carried their cooking pots with them. And when they first landed, did they depend upon loot and marriage by capture, or did they draw their supplies and women from home? And if they brought their women and children with them, how did the mothers wash and dress their babies amid the general dirt and confusion of conquest?

These are things that Homer would have told us with scientific accuracy, but we often find genuine historians wanting in serious information. One can look only to the Tapestry for a knowledge of the things that really matter, and there, tucked away in the border or stuck as a semi-colon between the scenes, one sometimes finds it—a design of a man with sword and shield gallantly facing a chained and muzzled bear; or two invaders setting fire to the roof of a cottage, while a poor widow in black hurries out, leading a sick and hungry child by one hand, and with the other protesting her sorrows to the stars; or that other scene where the embarking heroes drag to the shore a four-wheeled cart conveying, amidst a forest of spears, the genial shape of a wine-barrel big on the bodies of two warriors, and girt about with parti-coloured hoops. "Hic trahunt carrum cum vino et armis," runs the script. Evidently wine and arms were as natural a combination as a guardsman and a nursemaid.

But the Tapestry came some two hundred years after Rou, and in those two little centuries the pirates had already disappeared. They had become respectable, landowning Frenchmen, and had even

forgotten their mother-tongue. It was everywhere the same. Of all conquerors they were the best, for in country after country they came, conquered and vanished. In a generation or two, nothing of them was left but their touch upon the stones, and the sound of a few splendid names among the leaders of the people. We imagine them violent, stern, and a good deal occupied with pride of birth, but there must have been something peculiarly receptive in their blood. "More Irish than the Irish," may be an impossibility, but many a fine Irish rebellion has been led by a Norman name. And the saying holds at least as well of France, Sicily, the Balkans, and our own country. Where are the conquering Northmen now?

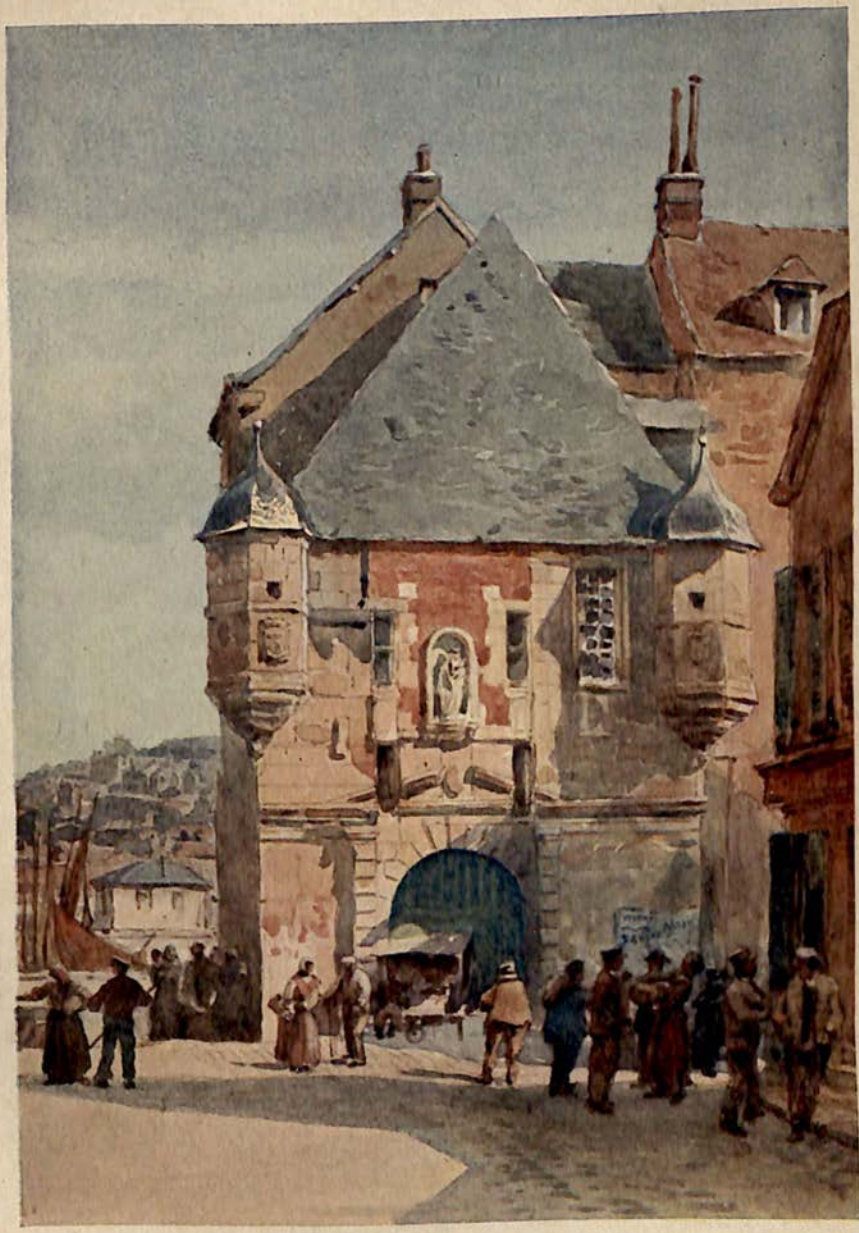
There must have been something peculiarly receptive and sympathetic in their blood. When our own Conqueror dragged his *fiancée* up and down the room by the hair, it may seem to us that such treatment could hardly have been ingratiating to a woman of any pride. But Matilda knew well enough what she was doing when she refused to allow occasional outbreaks of that kind to stand in the way of her affections and marriage prospects. She knew, I think, that those Norman pirates were singularly susceptible to woman's influence. It was that which made them such good conquerors. It is that which has obliterated their race in every nation they overcame.

Still I like to think that among ourselves some traces of their nature may be felt. We know all about the Celtic leaven which has put a stir and

HONFLEUR, HARBOUR GATEWAY

"LET us follow the ships of Rou, and steal gradually into the heart of the land by that river-road where Harfleur and Honfleur still act as water-towers at the entrance gate."

Plate 3



mystery into the heavy Saxon stuff. But the dash of Norman in our blood has been rather overlooked. Yet the great prophet of last century discerned it forty years ago—just at the time, too, when people were being commanded to fall down and worship the solid Saxon as the most successful incarnation of humanity. In his prophetic book of "Frederick the Great" (Book iv. chap. iii.), Carlyle exclaims:

> England itself, in foolish quarters of England, still howls and execrates lamentably over its William Conqueror, and rigorous line of Normans and Plantagenets; but without them, if you will consider well, what had it ever been?—a gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles, capable of no grand combinations: lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil, and silence and endurance, such as leads to the high places of this universe, and the golden mountain-tops where dwell the Spirits of the Dawn.

If that is true, it is much that we owe to these wanderers of chivalry, the Don Quixotes of the world. They went over the earth with a sword and a song, a sea-bred people touched with the gentleness of France. They bore with them the serious and unyielding mind, the glory of unprofitable enthusiasm, and those visions of eternal things without which humour is only fun. If ever the English people is roused even for a day to noble action, if ever we launch out upon some hopeless, profitless, and purifying crusade, if ever, inspired by the Spirits of the Dawn, our laughter rises above the level of the esplanade, we may say to ourselves, "There is the tang of Norman in the blood."

It must, of course, have been very gratifying to have lived in the days when politicians and his-

torians were flattering the natural self-complacency of those "gluttonous Jutes and Angles," and even poets were doing their hardest to write in a conglomerate of gritty, sandy little words that they called "pure Anglo-Saxon." How satisfactory to have followed John Bright and Freeman—those great names—in testing the success and beauty of every other nation according as it approached or differed from our own! Let us remember how comfortable to the English spirit was the standard of excellence which Freeman used in speaking of this very Normandy through which we are passing now:

> In every part of Normandy (he says) the Englishman feels himself at home as compared with France or Aquitaine, but in the district of Bayeux he hardly seems to have left his own country. The land is decidedly not French; men, beasts, everything, are distinctively of a grander and better type than their fellows in the more French districts; the general aspect of the land, its fields, its hedges, all have an English look.

I think Du Maurier must have had that passage in mind when he devised that charming scene at a French watering-place. Anxious to please, the polite Frenchman remarks that England is certainly the country for fine dogs and horses. "Et pour hommes et pour femmes et pour jolis petits enfants," answers the Englishman, stretched upon the sand with his pipe in his mouth and his wife and children around him. "Men, beasts, everything, are distinctively of a grander and better type—all have an English look." It is certainly comforting. It must have been very heaven, as Words-

worth says, to have been alive in those days and to have believed what was told you.

In Normandy, when the spring has fully come, the air is filled with an ample light, and the sunshine is not pale but golden. All the flowers appear at once—large cowslips and large wallflowers, lilacs, acacia, wild roses, and even the heavy elder blossom that in England tries to sweeten summer's middle age. Yet the smell of all the flowers is hardly better than the smell of the young oaks. The orchards are white with blossom—pears, plums, and apples all flowering together—and the grass of the orchards is what Victorian poets used to call "lush"—a pretty word that has fallen from grassy meadows down to beeriness. Cattle and sheep stand browsing the smooth green, and every little farm keeps one patch of orchard for a mare and foal. It all looks quiet and prosaic enough, and I never understood why to me there should always be a trouble, a stir of romance, a mingled strangeness and expectation in the beauty of flat grass under orchard trees. Poets have felt it too, and in an orchard it was found that "love, sleep and death go to the sweet same tune." Why do orchards especially hold such secrets lurking in them? Is it the unconscious memory of so many gentle meetings that they have seen?—just as the dark still frightens children with a dim memory of all the wolves and dragons and things serpentine that terrified mankind for long ages of nights.

In country clothes hung out to dry on bushes, as they are dried through mile after mile in Nor-

mandy, there is, on the other hand, something particularly gay and refreshing; and that, too, the poets have seen:

> The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,
> With heigh! the sweet birds. O, how they sing!

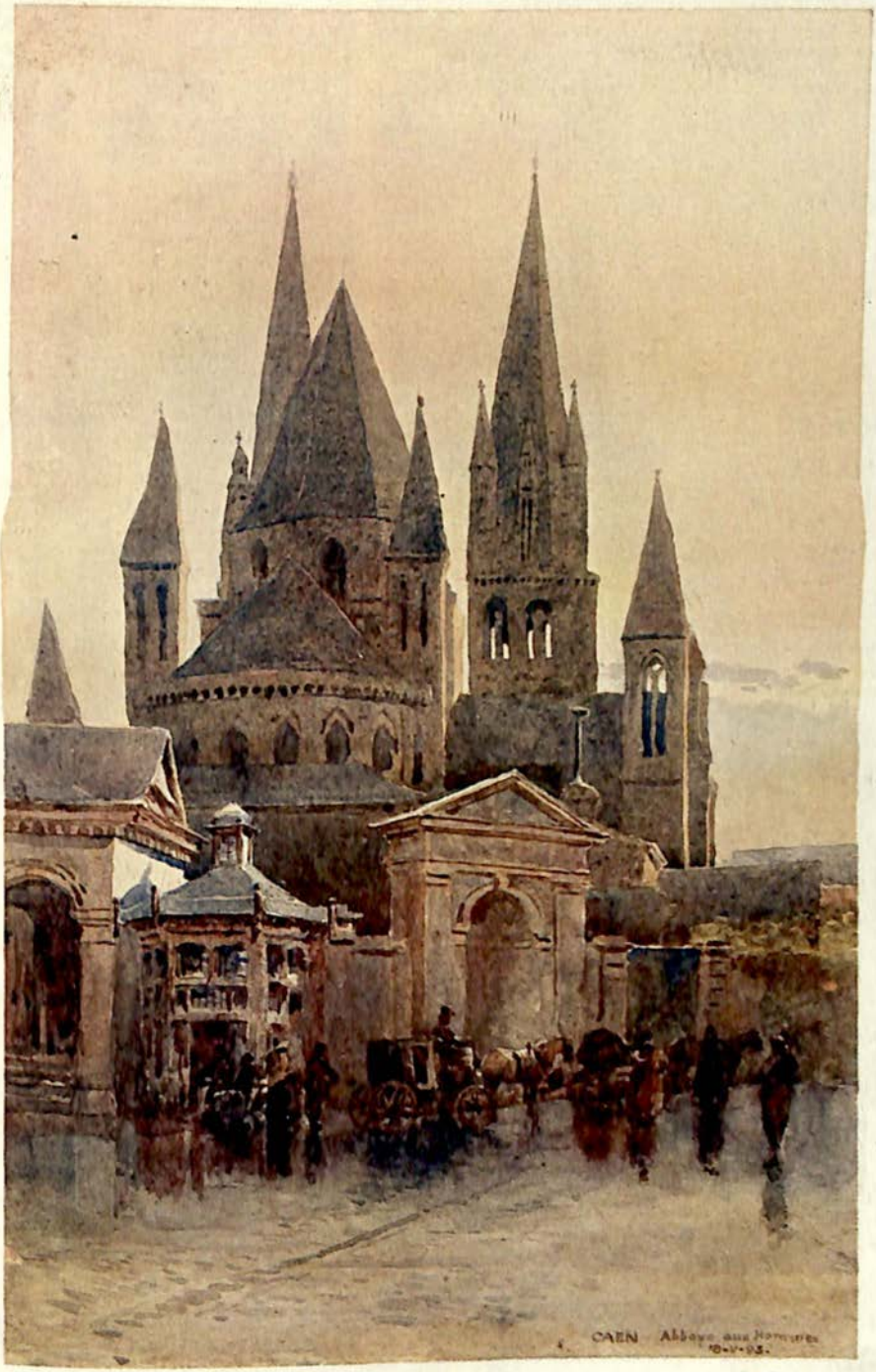
One might suppose that this delight came, like the other, from some unconscious association, some racial memory of all the glad days of spring when the clear sun and the bellying wind made washing day a pleasure because of winter's end. But I have observed that, when I saw the Kaffirs hanging out the washing under an African sun and using the barbed wire of the fence as an equivalent for thorns to prevent it blowing away, I felt no corresponding delight, even when the linen was my own.

There we come upon one of the secrets of beauty in a land like Normandy. Behind the present surface of it all, we feel the touch of old and noble history. There lurk the Middle Ages; there are the dead people we have known—ladies dead and lovely knights, who gave a lingering beauty to their world. Coming back from the colonies, where there is nothing to remember but dulness and nothing to hope for but prosperity, one notices the difference more than if the old countries had never been left. At the first touch of ancient land, we feel the touch of the wild and variegated history behind it. All the influences of spirit and temper that have passed into our nature begin to stir. We move among the scenes of gay stories and half-forgotten

CAEN, CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN (THE ABBAYE AUX HOMMES)

COMMENCED by William the Conqueror in 1066, in gratitude for his victory at Hastings. "There we come upon one of the secrets of beauty in a land like Normandy. Behind the present surface of it all, we feel the touch of old and noble history. There lurk the Middle Ages; there are the dead people we have known—ladies dead and lovely knights who gave a lingering beauty to their world."

Plate 4


CAEN Abbaye aux Hommes
10-V-93.

battles; the names of the streets are centuries old; many generations have made the houses what they are, and in churches like these our fathers were christened and wed. Vulgarity, of course, is always possible among peoples of Teutonic stock and among them only. But it sometimes seems as though, even in Teutonic races, vulgarity could never reign undisputed if their land has once been trodden by the classic forms and breathed upon by the spirit of romance. Even to ourselves that thought should bring some comfort, as the County Council's lightning whirls our car through Tooting.

But we are in Normandy now, passing among deep orchards by white roads and through cornlands and fields of yellow mustard towards some ancient town like Caen. Some of the old farms are timbered, like the farms in Shropshire, but, except along the edge of the coast, the people have naturally used the rock that lies in a solid mass only a foot or two under the surface. This is the "Caen stone," famous in England under that name in Evelyn's time, as he notices. For the villages it is cut small and thin, giving a roughish surface to the walls, and it weathers to a brownish yellow. In shape and texture the houses are something like the villages along the streams near Salisbury, but in colour they come nearer the Northamptonshire villages about the Naseby watershed, where there is much iron in the stone.

Here and there, but not very often, we pass a country house—a "château" with an open avenue

leading down to the road. The hay, growing close up to the windows, gives to a mere pleasure-house almost the dignity of a farm. The place itself is seldom more than sixty years old, and the design is always the same—a high-pitched roof with dormers, two stories of comfortable rooms, the windows flush with the walls, two wings in the same plane, and a paved courtyard at the entrance. There is something fine and simple about it, as of a descendant of Louis XIV., who has become a respectable solicitor and calls himself "M. Quatorze." In spring the whole place is shut up and deserted, just like the country houses of England. But in France the presence or absence of "the family" makes much less difference than with us. Nearly all French villages are, in fact, free from the influence of squires or other ornamental people. The "family" owns very little land and has no power beyond it. There is no class posted through the country to spread the ideals of a leisured and sporting existence as the highest aim of man. Equality is a real and tangible thing, not of property but of temper, and the titles of "sir" and "madam" are given to all mortals alike who have contrived to live a certain number of years beneath the sun.

It is that sense of an equality won without striving which makes France the best of all lands to live in. It is the unconscious feeling of equality that preserves the blouse and other signs of the workman's dress. It preserves the varied white caps for the women, the picturesque aprons, and the wooden sabots. Where equality is assumed to exist

as a matter of course, there is no need to strain after it by affecting similarity and wearing second-hand clothes. A workman may dress as a workman if it has never occurred to him that he is not the equal of a bank clerk; just as a duke or a journalist among ourselves need take no care what he puts on. Of nations I have seen, the Greeks alone assume equality with the same assurance as the French. But the Greeks are a little bumptious about it, whereas the only bumptious man in France is the station-master of St. Oberon-des-Près, and he is bumptious only on Sundays, when he wears the cap with gold braid.

Where once equality has been reached, man cannot suffer degradation, and it is no menial office but a glory for a lover to black his lady's boots. And so I was not surprised at finding in the great square before the Conqueror's castle at Caen that, for the sake of simplifying the cattle-market, the words "Louerie d' Ouvriers" are painted up on the ancient fortifications next to the placard "Moutons." In England the leader-writers would be recalling the Babylonish slave-market. But in England every one is afraid of "demeaning himself," and we have no assurance of equality.

The morning after the cattle-fair was the Feast of Ascension—the most cheerful festival of the year—and down the clean streets with their large blocks of paving-stone, past the varied houses with high roofs of ancient slate and mansarde windows telling of seventeenth-century life, there rose the pleasant noise of light feet as the people filed past

to the great service in the Abbaye aux Hommes. The dangers of reading the character of a race from its architecture are obvious enough, and like the dangers of the Mer de Glace, they have been faced too often now to be tempting for their own sake. In architecture, the greatest of the arts, one might have expected some sort of relationship between a building's form and the spirit of the builders. But go to some of the churches of Languedoc or Provence, and in the midst of a population utterly different from the old Norman, you find buildings expressing every essential characteristic of the Norman spirit. And yet, in spite of all contrary instances and the degrading ease of theorising, it does seem as if the Normans, as we like to imagine them, could have built in no other style but this of the church where the Conqueror was buried. One can hardly imagine him and his chain-armoured stock, on whose soul still rested something of the sea's gray seriousness, trying to rival Amiens by the fairy-work of Beauvais choir and raising it to such a height of tenuity that it would not stand, beautiful as it is. Nor can we imagine them stitching and propping up the scanty outer walls with iron brace and flying buttress, as at Le Mans, so that the windows around the altar might gleam with the radiance of transparent curtains. But all such speculations are only fantastic. As in speculations on heredity, we feel that somewhere the truth must lie, but assertions are too easy and contradictions too quick. How did Languedoc, close neighbour to the Gascons, produce the severity and

BEAUVAIS, EAST END OF THE CATHEDRAL, 1247

THE Choir is the most lofty in the world. "In the work which seems to me the great type of simple and masculine buttress structure, the apse of Beauvais, the pinnacles are altogether insignificant, and are evidently added just as exclusively to entertain the eye and lighten the aspect of the buttress as the slight shafts which are set on its angles."—*Ruskin.*

Plate 5

strength of S. Sernin? Or what genius had the sons of Burns and the father of Blake?

Up swung the censers, eight in a row, to the full length of their six-foot chains and the arms of the skilful acolytes. Then all the people came out from the cool of the thick-walled church into the blaze of the sun. And in the afternoon they went to Vespers at Matilda's Abbaye aux Dames, where it is pleasing to imagine just a feminine touch upon strength. And having heard of the ascension of the spirit, so possible for every one, especially in spring, they went out in the evening with great comfort to the little fair in the public meadow beside the river, and shot at dummy rabbits, gambled for sweets, or gazed at Mademoiselle Victoria, the English mermaid, and then took the children home to bed.

As I went down one of the silent streets that night, thinking of France and of all the happiness and daring that was implied in that beautiful word, it so happened that from one of the upper windows came the sound of music. Some one was playing a Beethoven sonata. It was the sonata to the Countess of Brunswick, and as I listened I remembered the scene where I had heard it last—the dusty red road, the shining eucalyptus trees, the winter stars of a South African June. That day the British army had entered Pretoria, and I was searching about for Lord Roberts' headquarters, when through an open window in one of the broad roads between the station and Sunnyside came the sound of that sonata, as though in

defiance of the worst that man could do. What were guns and baggage-trains and sweat and death to it? What were flags and triumphs? It was like the cuckoo I once heard calling among the Macedonian hills, and never stopping all the afternoon, no matter how loud the rifles rang. And now again in a silent street of France I heard the same music, the same wealth of passionate sound, regardless and immortal, more lasting than the Abbey stones, more profound than the nightingale's song when he is so lost in ecstasy that a hand may hold him and he will not stop.

That is the appeal of art. It is called universal, and so it is. But it springs from the very depth of nationality. An alien may see its beauty, but for the child of its own race it bears a tenderness, an inner depth of kindred emotion that an alien cannot know.

Next morning as I climbed the gentle ground between Argentan and Alençon, which rises just enough to turn some of the water into the English Channel and some into the Bay of Biscay, I fell to conversing with a peasant, as a Briton will. With immense patience he was engaged in getting things to grow out of the earth. But still he professed himself interested in politics and the other common subjects of human intercourse. At last, as though to finish argument, he said:

"There is only one thing that France has now to fear."

"You mean this religious question—the dispute with Church and Pope?"

CAEN, CHURCH OF ST. JEAN

"In every part of Normandy the Englishman feels himself at home as compared with France and Aquitaine, but in the district of Bayeaux he hardly seems to have left his own country."—*Freeman.*

Plate 6

S. JEAN - CAEN
A. H. HALCAM MURRAY.

"No, I don't mean that," he said.

"Do you think there's any fear of another German war, then?"

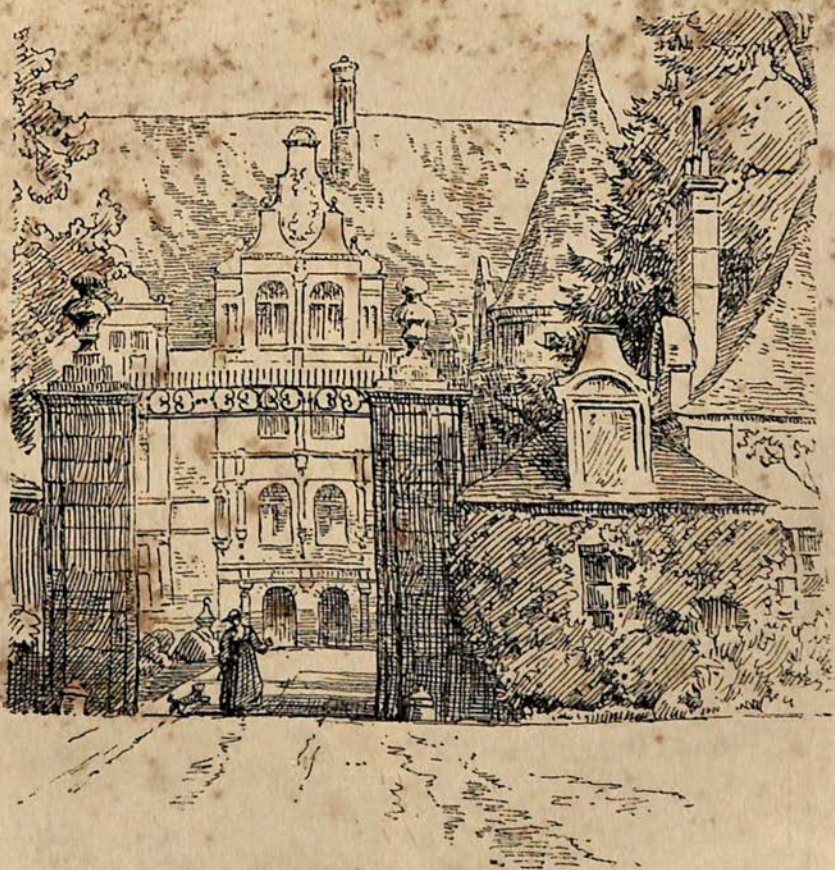
"I don't know. I wasn't thinking of that."

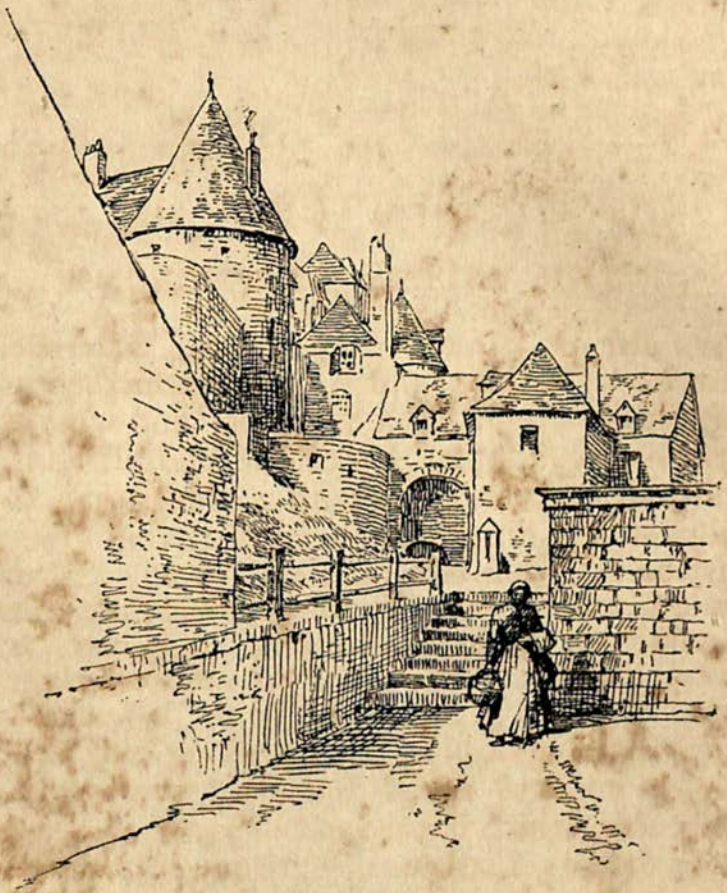
"I suppose you are not afraid of Socialism?"

"Not at all," he answered.

"Well, then, what is the only thing France has to fear?"

"Hail," he said, and went on digging.





CHAPTER II

THE VALLEY OF THÉLÉME

THOUGH, as I have noticed, the watershed of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou lies further north, the drinkshed between the cider and wine is not perceived by the traveller on the road till he is well south of Le Mans, and with a sudden joy, as of a pilgrim at sight of Rome, he discovers vineyards instead of orchards around him. And so, already a little bemused, like Penthesilea, with the spiritual significance of those plants in magic rows, which good English girls call "so uninteresting," he takes one step in a hundred to the left, and by an imperceptible decline, as of sinking into sleep, he slides into the broad and shallow wineglass of Touraine, which is the land of joy.

In dreams, I suppose, every one sees clear water running under castle walls, for in dreams the dusty spirit returns to the childhood of romance. It was naturally in a dream that the poet beheld the vision of Alph, the sacred river, moving with mazy motion beside that stately dome. In waking life, too, it is sometimes the same. I do not know what dim memories of ancestral existence may have caused the charm, but jutting into the Severn above

Shrewsbury there used to be a world-worn red-sandstone wall, the foundation for a few tumbledown cottages which natives called "the Pig Trough," and to me as a boy that wall, with the water gliding under it, was full of the promise of every mystery and strange delight. Virgil felt it too. That was one of the things which made him the first of modern poets—the first Italian poet—the turning-point in the creation of beauty. In that passionate description of Italy, breathing the very spirit of the nationality that yearns with proud affection over a native land, we read on with growing excitement, knowing what is to come; slowly we pass the great words in succession; we reach the towns piled up by man on dizzy cliffs; and then with a deep breath of satisfaction we float into the one scene more enchanted even than towns like those:

Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros

those rivers sliding under ancient walls. It is the very height of beauty, and it is hard to pass to the great lines beyond, even though the superb invocation,

Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
Magna virum.

—even though that is calling us on. In fever, in extreme danger, in most unlikely scenes, the four words of that great line about the rivers and the walls will go winding through the unconscious purlieus of the mind, like one of the tunes that are always sounding there.

It is the line for the dreaming castles of Touraine.

Their sliding rivers are the Loire and its southern tributaries—Cher, Indre, and Vienne. The main stream comes from a long way off; almost as far south as Orange, almost as far south as Avignon it began to run, and but for the barrier of the Cevennes it might have turned into the Rhone at a dozen places and finished its course in a blue sea instead of a grey. By the time it reaches Touraine, it has entered upon a wild old age, and, like all wild old rivers, the stream is full of magic islands—yellow banks of stones and sand, held together with loose-strife and willow-herb, but still so shifting that they serve as blessed No-man's-lands for the birds and boys, while the water hurries past them, gurgling as the Thames gurgles against anchored barges. But the tributaries, coming only from the low hills of stone that keep them out of the Garonne, are younger and more demure. They wander through lengths of poplared meadows with an almost noiseless stream, showing its strength only by the swirling eddies of the current, or by the tremulous movement of the reeds, over which blue dragon-flies hover. From none of the castles and ancient walls are the murmur and stir of living water far removed. Water is the very street between the ruined stones of Beaulieu, where no one ever goes because it is half a mile from Loches. Water steals past Azay-le-Rideau like the quiet breathing of sleep. It flows through the very arches of Chenonceaux, and at the feet of Blois, Chaumont, Amboise, Luynes, and Langeais, the waves of the Loire itself are heard.

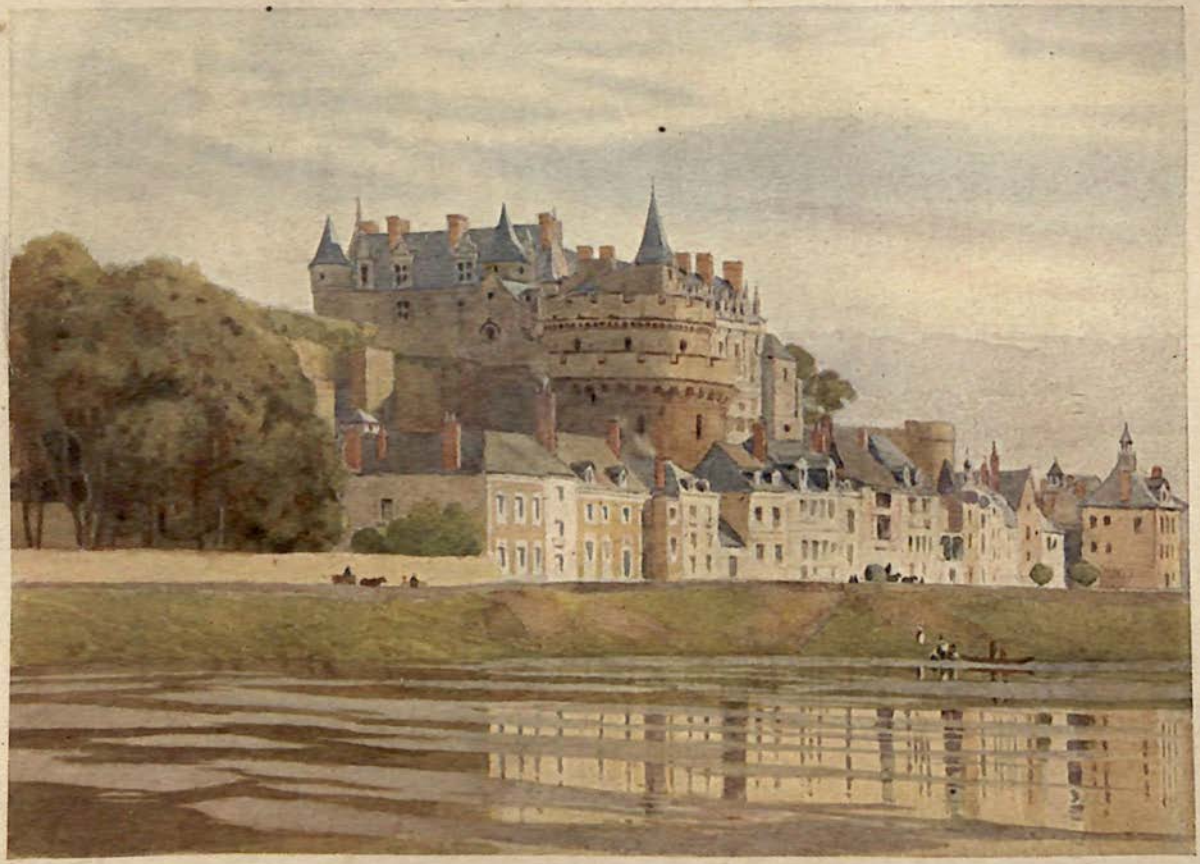
It is a land of streams and growing things. From the solitary towers of St. Martin of Tours—the dear saint of soldiers—the prospect tells only of peace and all that the sunny earth can yield in abundance to a people who never till her patient soil in vain, and seldom till it for another's pocket. The earth is white and clean. Where some stream or subsidence has cut across one of the long and gentle heavings of the surface, it leaves an edge of soft white rock, in which the people can scoop out holes and caves, like sandmartins in a cliff. Arthur Young calls the rock tufa, and I daresay it is. He pities the people for living in such caverns as they made in it. No boy would pity them, but, I think, few live entirely in those nice cave-dwellings now, for man is everywhere ceasing to be prehistoric. And a sad thing that is, seeing that only rheumatism, typhoid, and municipal boards drive him from nature's ways. Yet nature had a dearer aim than habitations in view when she laid down that soft coat of tufa, so warm in frost, so cool in summer heats, and induced poor little mankind to scrape his caverns there for his women and brood. Those cave-dwellings are wine-cellars now—such wine-cellars as never were.

The land is very kind. With motherly simplicity, it offers to all its children the old symbolic gifts of bread and wine. If they but labour in healthy measure, they are fed. And for holidays it is just such a land as Gargantua was turned out upon by his wise tutor to divert him from too vehement intension of the spirits. For once a month,

AMBOISE, THE CASTLE

SHOWING part of the façade of Charles VIII. and one of the huge round towers in which, by means of a spiral inclined plane, access was given for horsemen and carriages to the Castle yard, from the river level below; as Evelyn says, "One stayre-case is large enough and sufficiently com'odious to receive a coach & land it on the very towre, as they told us had been don." It was up this inclined plane that Charles V. rode to meet his royal host, Francis I.

Plate 7



upon some fair and clear morning, he would pass out into the country, and there spend all the day long in the greatest cheer that could be devised, sporting, making merry, drinking healths, playing, singing, dancing, tumbling in some fair meadow, unnesting of sparrows, taking of quails, and fishing for frogs and crabs. He who has seen a quiet and civil burgher of Touraine setting off with rod and basket to his fishing at dawn, while still the white mist lies upon the river and meadows, need go no further for the vision of man's happiness.

Into such kindly scenes the castles have brought the black streak and the red. At Blois, tradition still records the footsteps and the silence as second by second, Henry of Guise drew nearer to his murderers. And where, high above the Loire, Amboise stands, once so delicate in its coat of grey, now scraped till it glares like the Gare de Lyons—there Margaret of Scots wore out her little life. Daughter of the poet-king of Scotland, herself was free and fair till the shadow of the Dauphin fell upon her, and she learnt the man whom France learnt later as Louis XI. "Fie upon life, talk to me no more of it!" she cried as she yielded up her weary ghost, being then only twenty-one, with nothing but youth behind her. There, too, hardly more than a century later, stood another Scottish girl, so slim, so quick of eye, so passionate for life, and there beside the Queen Mother she beheld the Huguenot conspirators brought up for death in piteous lines. Be sure she never turned her little face away, but watched with fascinated gaze as the

blood splashed on the pavement in deeper pools, and one after another the heads of men rolled off till the official butcher himself was tired of swinging the axe.

How lonely it must have been to be kept for many years in a cage, and how indecent a mode of life! Even a caged bird has a bath or tries to splash in its drinking-trough. When the sun shines and the floor has been newly sanded, and the food just changed, I have seen a caged bird trying to imagine itself in the suburbs of freedom. But what bath had Cardinal Balue as he hung at Loches in darkness visible, while summer followed summer, and only the chilling draught through the opened door told him that winter was come? What did he think about while, one by one, a thousand days and nights went by, and found him still swinging there in a coop with wickered floor and wickered sides, like an eagle consigned by steamer from Chimborazo to the Zoo? What did he think about when ten days and nights had gone, and the keeper came to see that he was all right, and to thrust his piece of flesh between the bars? Did such thoughts come to him as came to Wordsworth while in a grove he sat reclined? Certainly he with more right than most would have asked Wordsworth's question:

> Have I not reason to lament
> What man has made of man?

And if Wordsworth, instead of reclining for an hour in a grove, had swung for a year in a cage, could he have said more?

And Philip de Comines, the true historian, he, too, had his caged period at Loches. If his cage did not swing in air, he was fenced into a little window's embrasure in the thickness of the wall, and a trellis-work of beams barred him in, as may be seen to this day. There he was left to meditate on the nature of kings and the philosophy of history, and to draw strong conclusions for himself. I have not the least doubt that such is the best training for the historian. What vigour and reality would have been added to the works of Dr. Stubbs, the late Bishop of Oxford, or of Dr. Gardiner, if some king or other constitutional authority had clapped him into a cage for a year or two! It is impossible to estimate how much their conclusions would have gained in conviction and persuasive force. It is because Thucydides commanded a fleet and was exiled by Cleon that we still read his book. Who cares what a German professor, who has done nothing but read and write and live in his slippers, says about anything in this world or the next? See how a public meeting, full of amiable intentions, drowses and dozes along its hour till the man who has seen and suffered gets up, and then how the quickening spirit begins to move over the face of the inane.

But a thousand days and nights in a cage! It is an outrage. Think what the cardinal might have done had he been free as we are—what prayers he might have said, what sermons preached, what wars witnessed, what cities visited, what women loved! Take five meals a day as a fair ecclesiastic

average, including afternoon teas, and he would have appeased his hunger five thousand times. Assume that he lived in Touraine every summer; on a moderate drinker's computation, he would have consumed seven hundred puncheons, eighteen hogsheads and a firkin of Chinon wine, and have fallen asleep on two thousand different occasions (in the Middle Ages every one slept after lunch), not counting service times, when sleep, being forbidden, is most certain. All these things he might have done instead of sitting idle in his cage, if only he had not been mistaken in his political views; to say nothing of washing his hands, brushing his hair, and telling fifty thousand seven hundred funny stories about his dogs and his curates. But all the time he hung in his cage with great monotony.

Man needs a gallery for life, a certain audience for virtue. Let a man but travel three days by himself without converse, and he begins to disintegrate. A scum mantles over his brain, his courage is dulled. Confront him with a lonely danger and he will hardly be brave. The Quixotic heart brutalises, the faithful lover turns to the nearest wench for human converse. If it is so in three days, what character will a man have left him in ten years? Yet it is so we reform criminals, and think we save their souls.

"I should smother," said the American girl when they showed her the hole where Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, called also Il Moro, and hailed by poets and artists as "the light and splen-

LOCHES, ONE OF THE TOWN GATEWAYS

"THE little streets of Loches wander crookedly down the hill and are full of charming pictorial 'bits,' an old town gate, passing under a mediæval tower, which is ornamented by Gothic windows and the empty niches of statues."—*Henry James.*

Plate 8

dour of the world," was shut up at Loches till at last he died. It is a cellar scooped out of the solid cliff below the castle foundation, and on one side a chink of window casts a glimmer upon the opposite wall. There "the light and splendour of the world" had his habitation. His portraits are well known and they all agree, but I see him in his dungeon—the smooth mass of hair turned to a tangle of white, the keen eyes faded like the eyes of subterranean fishes, the pride gone from the clear-cut features, the heavy jaw and throat shrunk into wrinkles like a lizard's. I see him day after day watching the glimmer of light dawn upon the rock, till at last he could just see clearly enough for his daily task of scratching sentences and figures upon the stone. For he had the poetic soul, and in all Europe was no greater patron of the arts and sciences living than was he. Certainly no mortal that ever crawled to the grave had a finer opportunity of enjoying what one of our own poets has called "The Pleasures of Memory." If to poor English Samuel Rogers, who when he wrote the poem was too young to have anything to remember, memory was so pleasant, what must it have been for Il Moro to recall the magnificent court of Milan and his happy boyhood there, the splendour of his maturity when he was gathering the manuscripts at Pavia, building the Certosa's façade, devising masques and revelries, decorating the great churches, with Leonardo at his side! And there was his noble mistress, equally wise and fair, the Cecilia Gallerani, whom Leonardo painted, and

there his child wife, Beatrice d'Este, only fifteen, but already the lady *la piu zentil* in all Italy, and such a huntress of wild boars as was seldom seen. All were gone now; like a pageant they had swept past—the state and the gold, the gorgeous colours of the city, the buildings elaborated with such art, the gleaming manuscripts, the mistresses of his manhood—all were gone; and his child wife lay at rest in the monastery where Leonardo had painted the *Last Supper*. But if Rogers was right, if memory has pleasures, what a feast of joy was Lodovico's as the unchanging days passed over him in his cavern! Alas, they beguile us, these gentle English poets of the Rogers type! They have never suffered. They dare not look sorrow in the face. It was not to revel in pleasures of memory that the Duke of Milan, "light and splendour of the world," rose in his chilly shirt from the rock, but in order that upon that faintly glimmering wall he might engrave the words:

> Il n'y au monde plus grande destresse,
> Du bons temps soi souvenir en la tristesse.

And by those lines, the man who came afterwards into this pit of Inferno should at least know that a poet and an Italian had been there.*

Let us emerge again into the upper air with the thought of Richard Cœur de Lion battering at that same Castle of Loches three centuries before. He had himself just got clear of captivity, and I can

* For the whole history of Il Moro, see Julia Cartwright's "Beatrice d'Este" (1903).

imagine no greater joy than was his that day when, spurring through the streets clustered around the castle's foot, he reached the open enemy at last and felt their armour go crack under his great sword, like the carapaces of crabs.

At Langeais stands the old ideal of a castle just reaching that perfection which some things reach when they are about to die. It is so good that it is almost a burlesque. It is boyhood's dream of a castle; it is an abstraction, a prototype, a Platonic idea, an Aristotelian essence. It is Maeterlinck illustrated by Doré. It is *Ivanhoe* and the *Contes Drolatiques* mixed. Moat and swinging drawbridge, portcullis, pointed turrets, black dungeons, startling trap-doors, slit windows for archers, nice straight shafts for boiling lead, galleries for hide-and-seek—everything that a young heart could desire is there. No need to speak of banquet-halls, bedrooms, and walled gardens for the enjoyment of grown-up persons whose life is turning dull.

But the burlesque of mediævalism had already vanished, and a fairer vision of manhood and womanhood had risen when the noblest château of Touraine was built—that castle "which stands," as its builder said, "in the country of Thélème beside the river of Loire," and is more miniard and debonair even than Azay-le-Rideau. We also know from Rabelais, who was himself the architect, that this castle at the time of its building was a hundred times more sumptuous and magnificent than ever was Bonnivet, Chambord, or Chantilly. For there were in it nine thousand, three hundred, and two

and thirty chambers. The architecture was in a figure hexagonal, and at each of the six corners there was built a great round tower of three score feet in diameter, and all of the same form and size. Upon the north side ran the river Loire, and upon its bank stood the tower called the Arctic. For the rest, the whole edifice was six stories high, reckoning the underground cellars as one story, and the second story was arched like a basket handle.

The further account of the building, referring to its fine slates, "with an endorsement of lead, carrying the antique figures of little puppets and animals of all sorts, notably well suited to one another," seems to show that he had drawn some of his ideas from Blois, or more probably had helped as a boy to design the stone salamanders there, and perhaps even that decorative porcupine whose kind face says as plain as words can speak, "If you should think me fretful 'twere pity of my life."

From the famous spiral tower of Blois also, perhaps the great architect of Thélème derived his staircase:

> In the midst there was a wonderful winding stair, the entry whereof was without the house, in a vault or arch, six fathoms broad. It was made in such a symmetry and largeness that six men-at-arms, with their lances in their rests, might together in a breast ride all up to the very top of all the palace.

It is unfortunate that the great libraries in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish that used to stand between the Arctic Tower and the Criere have all disappeared. For, being distributed to Berlin, Göttingen, and the British Museum,

BLOIS, THE FOUNTAIN OF LOUIS XII., IN THE MARKET-PLACE

"IT is the sense of equality won without striving which makes France the best of all lands to live in. It is the unconscious feeling of equality that preserves the signs of workmen's dress. It preserves the varied white caps for the women, the picturesque aprons and the wooden sabots."

Plate 9

owing to the French Government's desire to buy battering-rams and catapults in their place, they have pined away, as some men pine with a home sickness for heaven. And I can avouch how heavy was the change for them, since I have myself lived at intervals, sometimes for many weeks together, in that sunshine castle with the Thélèmites, where no snivelling hypocrites enter, nor disturbers of people's ease, nor usurers, nor pelf-lickers, nor humoursome churls, but, as you may still read, written over the gate in large antique letters:

Grace, honour, praise, delight,
Here sojourn day and night,
Sound bodies, lined
With a good mind,
Do here pursue with might
Grace, honour, praise, delight.

Whenever I have been dwelling with the Thélèmites, among the innocent pleasures which they practise, I have observed that the ladies there, "of lovely looks and humour gay and free," in accordance with their statutes, still maintain the dress of the Order, though the names of the garments have been sometimes a little changed. They still put on the kirtle or vasquin of pure silk camblet over their smocks, and above that a taffety fardingale of white, red, tawny, grey, or any other colour. Over this, again, they have another of cloth of tissue or brocade, embroidered with fine gold, and interlaced with needlework, or as they think good; and according to the temperature and disposition of the

weather, they have their upper coats of satin, damask, or velvet, and these either orange, tawny, green, ash-coloured, blue, yellow, vermilion, crimson, or white.

I have observed also that the following account, written by their historian in the sixteenth century, soon after the foundation of the Order, is still true in nearly all particulars:

> In summer, some days, instead of gowns, they wear light, handsome mantles, made either of the stuff of the aforesaid attire, or like Moresco rugs, of violet velvet frizzled, with a raised work of gold, upon silver purl; or with a knotted cord-work of gold embroidery, everywhere garnished with little Indian pearls. They always carry a fair pannache or plume of feathers of the colour of their muff, bravely adorned and tricked out with glistening spangles of gold. In the winter time they have their taffety gowns of all colours, as above named; and those lined with the rich furrings of hind-wolves or speckled linxes, black spotted weasles, martlet skins of Calabria, sables, and other costly furs of inestimable value. Their beads, rings, bracelets, collars, carcanets, and neck-chains, are all of precious stones, such as carbuncles, rubies, baleus, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, turquoises, garnets, agates, beryls, and excellent margarites. Their head-dressing also varied with the season of the year, according to which they decked themselves. On holidays and Sundays they were accoutred in the French mode, because they accounted it more honourable, and better befitting the garb of a matronal pudicity.

As to the rules of the Thélèmites, we all observed them with the utmost strictness whenever I was there, the ladies of the Order no less than the men.

But when in 1903 and 1904, M. Combes, the Premier of France, was engaged in overthrowing the Religious Orders throughout the country, driving them from their immemorial buildings to seek refuge on what poetical journalists call the

Northern Heights of London, he attempted to deal with the Thélèmites in a separate schedule, ordaining that they should leave their castle by the Loire and go out into the world apparelled like other sensible people in Whitechapel slops, American cloth, sacking, sailor hats, grey or brown blouses, Jaeger underclothing, and rational boots. The schedule received the logical support of all reasonable men—Socialists, Imperialistic Democrats, Free Thinkers, educational experts, members of the Ethical Society, and the Buddhist Lodge at Clapham. But at the last moment it had to be withdrawn, because the Secret Intelligence Department in Paris informed M. Combes that a full army-corps of women was preparing to march upon his private residence with scissors, hat-pins, rolling-pins, knitting-pins, bodkins, tin-openers, skewers, fish-slices, lemon-squeezers, nutmeg-graters, cheese-scoops, and every kind of needle.

The head Intelligence Officer further added a note that in his belief every woman in France and the adjacent world was a Thélèmite at heart, and would gladly take the veil of the Thélèmite Order, together with the rest of the costume, if opportunity allowed. And for his part, he had observed that what they especially admired in the religious dress was the stocking of scarlet, crimson, or ingrained purple dye, reaching just three inches above the knee, and the shoes, pumps, and slippers of red, violet, or crimson velvet, pinked and jagged like lobsters' wattles.

On hearing this report M. Combes, justly ap-

prehensive of the overthrow of civil administration, quietly withdrew the schedule without being offered a penny for it.

The Order, therefore, still continues to pursue the life of delicate anarchy laid down by their founder, and proved by myself and all other associates to be the most innocent, cheerful, and commendable manner of life in all the world. For, as is well known :

All their life is spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rise out of their beds when they think good ; they do eat, drink, labour, sleep, when they have a mind to it and are disposed. None awake them, none offer to constrain them to eat, drink, nor do any other thing. In all their rule and strictest ties of their order, there is but one clause to be observed : Do what thou wilt.

No wonder that, under such discipline, never were seen ladies "so proper and handsome, so miniard and dainty," or more ready in every honest and free action belonging to woman's nature :

Fleurs de beauté, à celeste visage,
A droit corsage, à maintien prude et sage.

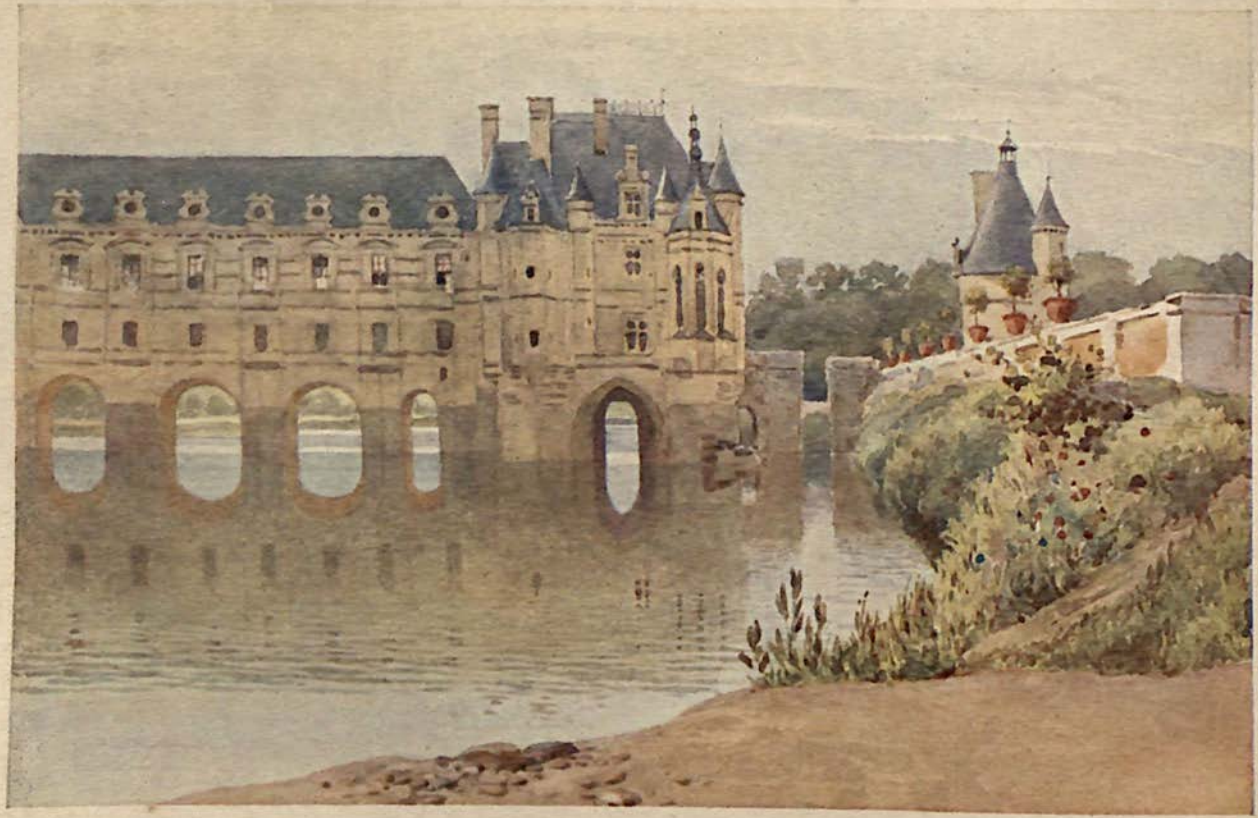
For to women, perhaps even more truly than to men, the wise words of the Founder in laying down the one great rule of the Order may be applied :

Men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, and this is called honour. These same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off that bond of servitude, wherein they are so

THE CASTLE OF CHENONCEAU

BUILT in 1515 by Thomas Bohier, banker, and Chancellor of Normandy, and given by Henry II. to Diane de Poitiers, whose initials are still to be seen there. "In early times a Roman villa seems to have stood upon this site, too lovely to be left long without an occupant . . . Later on the site was filled by a rough kind of feudal castle, to which . . . a water-mill had been added. . . . In the improvements which Catherine (Bohier) initiated, the old piles and massive masonry of the mill were cleverly made use of, and upon this solid base, made somewhat larger, the main body of Chenonceau was built."—*J. A. Cook.*

Plate 10



tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable to the nature of man to long after things forbidden, and to desire what is denied us.

But if any one, being himself relaxed and dull of heart, should wish to find ease by entering the Thélèmite Order because their rule appears to him light, let him rather seek such happiness as earth can give him among the Trappists, Flagellists, Lazarists, or the Fakirs of India; let him fast by rule on bread and vinegar, let him obediently slit his own back with wire thongs, let him swing by a hook above the crowd, pulp his bones beneath the car, grow his nails through the back of his hand, stand on one leg till the other joins it in the grave. In all these things the bulged and greedy spirit will find more ease than in dwelling as a Thélèmite under their anarch use. I myself, at all events, who have consorted with Thélèmites in exile and have dwelt in their great foundation, always found their mode of life the most perfect certainly, but also the most difficult in perfection. And that was to be expected; for the beautiful is hard.

In passing from Thélème to Chinon, which was the birthplace of the Order's founder and historian, I perceived that, after traversing the woods of Ussé, the locomotive took on a rollicking gait. Whether the stoker had filled the boiler up with wine instead of water I cannot say, but as I watched the engine at a stopping-place, it seemed to take on itself an almost human form, and I heard it saying, in the very words of Rabelais:

"I drink for the thirst to come. I am stark dead

without drink, and my soul ready to fly into some marsh among frogs: the soul never dwells in a dry place."

"Coleridge," I answered, "said that Swift was the soul of Rabelais *habitans in sicco.* Why did he not fly into some marsh with frogs? But, praised be heaven, this is no dry place here, and instead of desiccated Swift we live on Rabelais himself."

And indeed, as I entered into Chinon and passed up the merry old streets beside the Vienne, where a brown and ancient bridge still leads from heart to heart, I perceived that, though the wine was good, the succession of variegated houses, seen in perspective, had the appearance of a forest of wine-bushes. Over every threshold projected the symbols of the mystic enthusiasm—pine branches, larch branches, twigs of willow, boughs of the beech with last year's leaves still hanging on them like burnished halfpence. As clear as the inscription upon the goblet that was dug out of the ancient monument as you go to Narsoy, the branches say to the passer-by, "Hic Bibitur." Local option has worked its hardest. The voice of the people has declared that in Chinon, at all events, the thirsty soul shall never be driven to the next door for a drink. The door where he stands is nearer than the next, and from end to end of the town there is never a dry place.

Yet the local hero is neither fish nor frog. I had not been long in Chinon before I heard the fame of M. de Granbouche as a notable traveller. "Ah,

yes," they would say, innkeepers, waitresses, and washerwomen alike, "you must not go away without seeing Granbouche. He is a most celebrated man. He has an object in life. He has travelled all over the world."

"You may generally find him up at the castle between *déjeuner* and dinner," said one. "He always climbs the hill every day, to keep himself fortified for future exploits. A very remarkable man!"

So one afternoon I found him seated upon a bench just outside the tower, where Joan of Arc once waited in prayer for her first interview with the king, who happened to be much engaged at the time with Agnes Sorel, "that sweet and simple dove, whiter than a swan, more vermilion than a flame," as her tomb at Loches still shows. I could have no doubt that the famous traveller sat before me. He was looking over the teeming valley of the Vienne, with the far-off expression of a youthful Raleigh discerning new worlds beyond the ocean. His hair was grey, his cheek bronzed and weathered. I put his age at nearly sixty, but he was trim and active still, and there was that in his eye which characterises men of high enterprise and swift resolution. I have seen it in generals, lion-hunters, and players at ball.

"Yes," he began at once. "I am the man you seek. I am indifferent to fame, but certainly I have won the respect of my fellow citizens in Chinon, and I admit that I deserve it. There is no one now living who has eaten so many different things as I have. One of the Roman emperors may possibly

have surpassed me; otherwise I hold the record in history as well as in the modern world.

"From boyhood, with whole-hearted devotion, I have given up my life to the pursuit of eating. I have overcome every obstacle one by one. My task has often been difficult, involving much self-sacrifice, hardship, and even peril; as, for instance, when I ate the wild sheep of Kamchatka, and only narrowly escaped with my life from the cold, the bad food, and the devouring mosquitoes.

"I do not kill what I eat. Others go to kill, I go to eat, and you must allow me to call my aim more humane and civilised. Nor do I confine my pursuit to the consumption of slaughtered carcases, though as a rule they afford the more curious and entrancing sport. I am far from despising vegetables and plants of any remote and adventurous flavour, and one of my most celebrated expeditions was to the Malay Peninsula, in order to eat the durian, which smells like an open sewer but becomes delicious with experience. It took me six weeks to eat that fruit, but the exploit was worth the pain. It was what English sportsmen call 'a trophy' when they cut off a sheep's head.

"The English sportsman takes his trophy, scrapes the flesh from the bones and horns and skin, puts in the glassy eyes, and hangs the mouldering thing over his dining-room door to smell. My trophy I assimilate; it becomes one with my flesh, it supplies my brain with vitality, it coalesces with my immortal soul. It forms my character, it fortifies my will, it inspires my virtues,

and after this earthly life it will share with me the glories of eternity.

"Regard this hand." It was rather a good hand —thin, hard, and sunburnt. "When I look at it I behold again the strange substances of which it is composed, and I taste again their exotic flavours. I am myself the museum of my own collections. If I seek my monument, I look in the glass. My own body is the Walhalla of my glorious deeds, and for the worship of my soul I have sacrificed burnt-offerings in every land.

"I eat round the world, as Pierre Loti makes love, and with more permanent delight. I made my *début* as an eater with the freshwater snails of the Cher, and during my holidays as a boy I ate my way through the greater part of France, devouring the crayfish of the Tarn, the sea-slugs of Marseilles, and the lapwings of Brittany in great quantities. Having inherited a considerable fortune upon coming of age, I crossed the Channel in summer and ate faggots on the site of Shakespeare's theatre in Southwark, and bread-sauce on the Yorkshire moors. At Brixton I have eaten flour and water under the name of melted-butter, and in Ireland I have eaten sea-weed under the name of 'glory-be-to-God.' Advancing to Edinburgh I ate a haggis, and taking ship from there to Iceland I ate strips of whale's blubber for three days. After that, feeling like an inverted Jonah, I cast up on the German shore to eat blood-sausage. Next Eastertide found me in Mount Athos eating the legs of octopus stewed in leeks, and they tasted

like a line of Aristophanes. I then visited Bologna for the tagliatelli, and came down the Rhine to eat Pumpernickel. After a course of Wienerschnitzel and Prophetenkuchen at Halle University, I returned to Chinon to arrange my acquisitions.

"But the passion for concrete knowledge gave me no rest. Hardly had I assimilated German thought when I took ship for Delagoa Bay and devoured green mealies and the boiled heads of slightly putrefying cattle among the Swazis. Proceeding to Australia, I ate the dull white caterpillars that the natives draw from holes in the trees with thorns. I think it must have been on the same journey that I visited China to eat the glutinous bird's nest, and passing through British India, where I secured ghi, goor, and atta, I entered Persia to devour the tail of an Astrakan sheep. As I crossed Egypt in search of the potted crocodile supplied to the British garrison, I heard of the unknown animal discovered by Sir Harry Johnstone in Central Africa. Hurrying to Mombasa, I arrived in Uganda just too late. The creature had been already slaughtered in the interests of science, and I was not even allowed a share of its skin and bones to make soup. My only adequate compensation for such a loss would be to discover a surviving specimen of the giant sloth of Patagonia and eat it. But indeed the whole of the western world still lies virgin before me, and I look forward to an active old age spent in tasting the various foods that lie between the North-West Passage and Cape Horn.

"In the old world there is only one thing I regret. I have eaten bear's feet, and elk's nose, and camel's hump; I have eaten hotch-potch and Passover cake, and kosher kid; I have eaten yak's tripe and lamb's eyes, and wild boar basted with port wine; I have eaten Greek halva and Spanish liquorice, and the little cakes that Turks cry down the street at two in the morning; of birds alone I have eaten ten kinds of ducks, including the shoveler, four kinds of plover, three of larks, and of storks, cranes, herons, bitterns, flamingoes, ortolans, thrushes, nightingales, quails, and wrens a great number. One thing alone I regret: I have never eaten the symbolic cake with which English people observe the solemn fast of Good Friday."

I offered to send him a Hot Cross Bun in a box, but he shook his head mournfully.

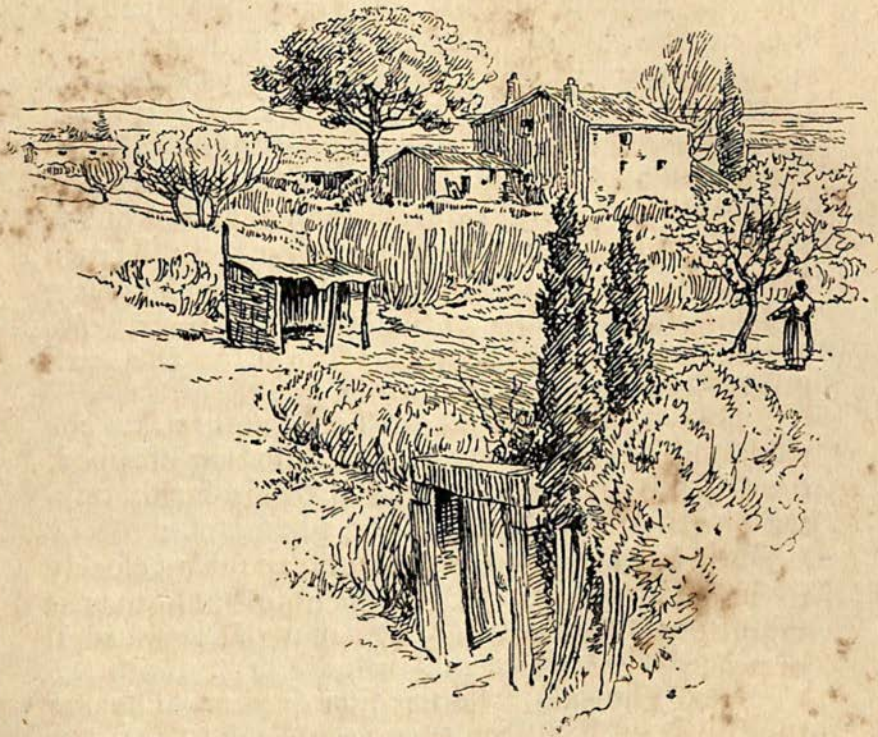
"You might as well offer a lion-hunter a stuffed lion from the Zoo," he replied. "But if the weather is calm, I will take England next Easter on my way to the conquest of the other hemisphere."

As he spoke, I heard the bell in the ancient clock tower of the castle striking the hour. It happens to be the selfsame bell that Joan of Arc heard striking the hours as she waited through all the delays of jealousy and suspicion for her audience with the King and her commission to deliver France—she *la plus simple bergère qu'on veit onques.*

CAHORS, PONT VALENTRÉ (1265–1383) FROM THE WEST

"THE Lot flows through Cahors deep and quiet only because of its frequent dams. It sweeps round the ancient town with a narrow horseshoe of water, and the old bridges run east and west. . . . The western bridge, built, I suppose, as defence against the quick-blooded Gascons, retains its three towers and the gate-ways that make of it the noblest bridge that could be imagined."

Plate 11



CHAPTER III

THE PLAIN OF LANGUEDOC

As a farewell thought of Touraine, I bear with me the memory of a little two-wheeled cart that a dog was drawing quietly along the embankment of the Loire. Occupied, like Rabelais's lion, with his own little private devotions, he trotted on his way, listening to the voice of his young mistress, who, seated with folded hands upright in the cart, guided him by pleasant words.

"He will run with me to Tours and back," she said, and hearing conversation, the dog stopped, drew in his tongue, and looked round at his mistress with great affection.

She wore a clean white muslin cap fitting closely to her little head. In the evening sunlight she might have been painted by any artist as an idyll of peace.

"Yes," she said, "he has lost one ear. The dog that bit it off has been ill ever since."

And her demure face was illuminated by an inward glow of satisfaction as she called to the dog and he padded along.

To pass from the land of Rabelais to the land of the Troubadours, the road has to make its way

through the old provinces of Marche, the Limousin, and Guienne, and for nearly all the distance after leaving Loches and Châteauroux it skirts the low and rocky hills that lead up to the mountains of Auvergne. Those quiet and unmelodramatic heights—the Cevennes, the Cantal, and the mountains of Auvergne—that hold the western bank of the Rhone, are the true benefactors of France, more truly beneficent with their silent and pure waters than the Alps and Pyrenees that pour down the glacial torrents grey with slime and stones. From them come the Loire and most of its tributaries, like the Indre which passes through George Sand's country just south of Châteauroux; and from them the tributaries to the Garonne's right bank—the Dordogne, Lot, Aveyron, and Tarn. The real division between the Loire basin and the Garonne lies just south of Limoges in the Limousin, where the rocky hills are broken up with valleys and sparkling little streams that smell of the mountains. All the Garonne tributaries have a more mountainous air than the waters of Touraine, and if they were not so carefully dammed for mills and navigation, they would run much as the streams in Yorkshire dales used to run before we converted them into sewers and blackened them with dye.

It is so that the Lot flows through Cahors, deep and quiet only because of its frequent dams. It sweeps round the ancient town with a narrow horseshoe of water, and the old bridges run east and west. The eastern bridge, though of great

CAHORS, PONT VALENTRE (1265–1383)
FROM THE EAST

Plate 12

beauty, is undefended and unvisited, for perhaps there was little danger from the eastern side. But the western bridge, built, I suppose, as defence against the quick-blooded Gascons, retains its three towers and the gateways that make of it the noblest bridge that could be imagined, beautiful though all stone or wooden bridges naturally are. It seems to have been built about the time when our Edward III. strangely considered that all this part of France was his private property, and so sent his Black Prince to trample upon it as a mark of possession, just as men trample upon their wives. But fortunately even the marriages that are made in hell are not eternal, and Guienne struggled so desperately for a divorce that she gained it, and has been poor but fairly happy ever since.

Cahors is Gambetta's town, and it is difficult to avoid the temptation of attributing something of his nature to the beauty of the place, its clanging history, and its ruins of all the ages that have gone to the creation of the France he loved. Such theorising is nearly always too easy, and the influence of the outside world upon genius is beyond calculation. But if Gambetta had been brought up in Birmingham, one can hardly imagine that he would ever have inspired such passionate affection in his people that, in spite of all his weaknesses, shortcomings, and failures, they would always reserve for his name the finest boulevard and the finest square, even the great Republic herself being placed second to her hero. There was in

Gambetta a splendour of action, a defiance of calculated interests and obvious profits, that one would like to trace to the traditions of this town of ancient bridges, and it is only by such splendour and such defiance that the heart of mankind is ever really attracted.

One day I was coming up the valley of the Lot from below Flaynac, and I passed through the gateways of the Pont Valentré and out over the eastern bridge as though Cahors were only an incident in a day's journey. I was thinking of a passage from Arthur Young, where he says that the poverty about the Lot reminded him of the misery of Ireland, which he knew well. It was only a few miles north of this, at Souillac on the Dordogne, Montaigne's Dordogne and Cyrano's, that he wrote:

> It is not in the power of an English imagination to figure the animals that waited upon us here. Some things that called themselves by the courtesy of Souillac women, but in reality walking dung-hills. But a neatly dressed clean waiting girl at an inn may be looked for in vain in France.

Among the waiting girls of France where now would you look for one that was not neatly dressed and clean? Yet it is not a hundred and twenty years since Arthur Young was here. He was here in 1787, and two years of hopes and fears were still to pass before the Bastille fell. Philosophers tell us that social changes are slow and revolutions have no effect. Poets drone about the falsehood of extremes and about freedom slowly broadening down. I only know that in France there was a revolution

marked by every extreme, that a good many worthy and unworthy people had their houses burnt and their heads cut off, and that in one little century so great has been the change that there is nothing in the department of Lot to remind one of the misery of Ireland now, nor in the waiting maids of France to remind one of walking dung-hills.

As I passed further up the river it was pleasant to imagine Arthur Young, with that sensible but poetic glance of his, travelling along the same road, perhaps in a carriage with the Bishop of Cahors, whom he mentions as a type of "an invariable sweetness of disposition, mildness of character, and what in English we emphatically call good temper," which he found eminently prevailing. It arose, he conjectured, from "a thousand little nameless and peculiar circumstances; not resulting entirely from the personal character of the individuals, but apparently holding of the national one." Such a temper has perhaps always eminently prevailed in France, and will continue to prevail as long as inexhaustible patience is taken in teaching the children those "thousand little nameless and peculiar circumstances" which go to make up manners.

And so, driving up the road with the unaffected and polished Bishop, the Suffolk squire would come to the village of Arcambel, on a wooded cliff overlooking the river. Though the Chevalier d'Arcambel was regarded as a man of dangerous enlightenment, and was known to read the Ency-

clopédie every night, the Bishop recognised him as a person whom foreigners ought to see, and he himself met the Chevalier on the common ground of an admiration for Voltaire's prose. It so happened that when they arrived they found the family engaged upon a little masque adapted from Gessner's idyll, called "The Path of Virtue; or, the Shepherd's Temptation." Ushering them through the delicate salon, with walls of tender green and thin-legged furniture stuck over with decorations in ormolu and brass, their host, dressed in a black satin suit with knee-breeches, brought them on to the narrow terrace, at one end of which his daughter was playing the shepherdess in distress. She had dropped her dainty crook, one of her shoe-strings was untied, and the real lamb, which she led with a pink ribbon, was as obviously perturbed as herself. A silent party of the villagers had been admitted to one side of the terrace, and the lamb's behaviour excited a mirth among the children, which their mothers strove to suppress. After the unfortunate swain had been reproved by the interposition of Diana, who rewarded his contrition by the promise of honourable wedlock, the villagers withdrew, receiving at the gate a present of a flower tied with white silk and a bone heart.

"Ah, M. le Chevalier," cried the Bishop, as they settled down to supper in the pure light of the summer evening, "like the old Marquis Mirabeau you are rightly called the Friend of Man."

During the meal the host explained to Arthur Young his new scheme of profit-sharing. The obligations of the Social Contract were also discussed, and the rising hopes of a renewed civilisation.

Five years later the Chevalier was whirled off in a tumbril from a Paris prison almost by accident. His son, who acted the importunate swain, lived to see Napoleon III. in his glory, and, since his death, the château has gradually decayed, being now occupied only by farm people. As I pushed open the wrought-iron gates that still swing between their classic stone posts surmounted by round balls—I don't know what is the peculiar attraction, the pathetic dignity that hangs about those classic courtyards of the eighteenth century, with the pale wistaria climbing over their simple decorations—as I crossed the rough white blocks of the pavement a fine brood of goslings came waddling and chattering and shovelling out of the front door. The old woman who spent her life directing their appetites let me enter. All was bare and beautiful in its whitewash. Only in one room a few relics of that vanished elegance had been heaped together—a few straight chairs, a satinwood table with the veneer splitting off, and a pile of books tied up in tape. They were bound in mottled calf, and, when I opened their pages, smelling of antiquity, I found them illustrated with oval engravings of *The Impassioned Letter*, *The Confidante*, *The Interrupted Toilet*, and other themes of voluptuous innocence. Down the three

stone steps, just outside the long window, lay the terrace, running to the edge of the cliff. Most of it was laid for hay, but the raised part where the idyllic scenes had been enacted was dug for asparagus, and a stone bench with lions' feet stood abandoned in the midst of the ridges.

Going south from Guienne into Languedoc, the road rises gradually, so as to cross the high ground that separates the Lot from the Aveyron and Tarn. It rises at first through vineyards where in spring the people are very busy washing the young leaves with a substance like chalk and water mixed with washerwoman's "blue." All the year round, even in winter, the vine gives man enough to do. Yet in these valleys most of the plants serve only for local use, and but a few of the aged and famous vineyards on the Lot send grapes to Bordeaux. The great vines spring out of the loose white pebbles of Médoc, between the Garonne and the sea. For the vine is a spiritual growth and sucks fine flavours out of the strangest surroundings, as spiritual natures do. So the people of the tributaries grow corn, vetch, beans, and abundant fruit to sell to less happy countries, especially to choking, smoke-stifled England, but they tend the vine for their own dear selves.

Most of the land in these valleys is now held in plots of three to eight acres, which each family cultivates for itself. As a rule they do not split up the land among the children, but the child that shows most aptitude for the work (not necessarily the eldest) gets the land when the father dies, the

TOULOUSE, CATHEDRAL OF ST. ÉTIENNE

THE Nave was built by Raymond VI., Comte de Toulouse, in the thirteenth century. "Toulouse, beside the brown and hardly controllable flood of the Garonne . . . possesses especially the two treasures of the queerest cathedral and one of the noblest churches on earth. Entering the cathedral through a west front that seems to combine all the years of the Middle Ages, you stand in a spacious nave, which is cut short at the end, and you only gradually discover that the choir is out of sight round the corner."

Plate 13

others having received some form of compensation, so that it is not universally true that the possession of land by peasants sterilises the race owing to fear of dividing the property. On the other hand, it is certainly a fact that the number of souls to be saved does not increase so fast in rural France as in an American city. Perhaps there are enough souls to be saved in England and America without the help of France. Anyhow, I think, in the two hemispheres, there must be some already who miss salvation in the crowd, and we may assume that the sole object of multiplying life is to multiply salvation.

As the road mounts the broad white wave of earth, the vineyards are gradually left behind and the land lies open for corn. For many miles the road then runs along the top of the unbroken wave through an exposed country, where the oxen are dressed in fair canvas cloths fastened over their loins, and the women bind heavy planks of wood on their own feet when they go to work in the fields. There must be many places in the world where that is done, and Thucydides says the party of Platæans who escaped from the siege did it to prevent them slipping in the mud. But I have seen it only in one other place myself, and that was among the scattered villagers who tramp the loose shingle of Dungeness. I suppose the dry ploughland of Guienne, sometimes reddish, generally white, is almost as tiring to walk on. But why they should be so careful about pretty jackets for the oxen I have not discovered. Is it that the sun

wastes the spinal marrow, or the north wind chills the reins? Or is it not rather that through a diverted vanity, the natural delight in little shoes, thwarted by the necessity of wearing boards, takes this vicarious form?

I cannot imagine what may have been the origin of such a queer name as Pêche des Filles, but just above that village, where the long ridge begins to fall away to the south and west, the view opens and reveals the whole great plain of Languedoc. Blue and grey, clothed with fertility, marked by great rivers, it stretches away till in the far-off distance something white is seen to be shimmering like the sails of huge ships just visible through mist. It is the long barrier of the Pyrenees and their snows, and from this quiet ridge in Guienne the nearest point is seen through a hundred and twenty miles of air.

In that vast plain of blue and grey, with the glimmer of snow beyond, how much bright history is lying dead! Celts and Romans, Visigoths who have not left a shadow, Saracens and Charles the Hammer, De Montforts and the slaughtered reformers of Albi, Troubadour Courts and hosts of English bowmen, all have passed over it like summer clouds, and it lies blue and grey between low hills and mountains, in the main unchanged by all those shouting and fantastic souls. The names of its cities are of singular beauty, even for French names, as are the cities themselves—Castelsarrasin, Castelnaudary, Montauban, and Carcassone! And in the very midst stands Toulouse

herself, beside the brown and hardly controllable flood of the Garonne. Rich in history, social ideas, vegetables, and all good things, she possesses especially the two treasures of the queerest cathedral and one of the noblest churches on earth. Entering the cathedral through a west front that seems to combine all the years of the Middle Ages, you stand in a spacious nave, which is cut short at the end, and you only gradually discover that the choir is out of sight round the corner. But in the great church of St. Sernin, the tenth or twelfth century builders have almost reached the grandeur of that Roman architecture which the barbarians came to inhabit like rats in a deserted palace.

St. Sernin boasts itself the most sanctified place upon this orb, and very likely it is, for highly sanctified bones have lain at one time in the ancient caskets and reliquaries of its crypt, and some are thought to have escaped the Revolution. As far as number goes, there are more bones embedded behind the glass in the church of St. Ursula's Virgins at Cologne, for of them there were eleven thousand. But for sanctity, as for all noble things, it is not quantity that counts, and St. Sernin's crypt held the bodies of seven of the Apostles themselves, and a few other very conspicuous saints as well. It still has a piece of the English St. Edmund the Martyr, the same whom Abbot Samson disinterred and reinterred with so tender reverence at Bury St. Edmunds in the time of John. How it got there I don't know. Perhaps one of the monks made a snatch and rescued it when Henry

VIII. pillaged the great shrine of East Anglia. Anyhow, there it is, and for the sake of Abbot Samson and Carlyle it is comfortable to think it safe, poor old thing!

The Apostles whom death brought together again in Roman Tolosa after these few years of life in Palestine, were not the greatest of the twelve. They were the seven who showed comparatively little personality. They were of the kind of men who are naturally called "the less." I suppose it was St. Peter, St. John, St. James, and St. Thomas who did not come there for burial—all of them men of distinctive character. But, indeed, it is in minor saints, as in minor poets, that the whole of the south of France is peculiarly rich. I am not sure that little Zacchæus, the same who climbed the sycamine tree, counts as a saint at all, but at all events he found his way to the south of Gaul with so many of his contemporaries, and climbed to a high cave in the beautiful cliffs of Rocamadour—that pilgrim shrine upon a tributary of the Dordogne, only some thirty miles north-west from Cahors, and there he spent his mellowing years. But there is St. Martha—a saint beyond dispute. It was reasonable that she should come to France, where housekeeping has reached the perfection belonging to sanctity. Unhappily she has become inextricably confused with the Syrian sorceress Martha, who assisted Marius to the enormous slaughter of Teutons at Aix, and may therefore be regarded as an enthusiast for good housekeeping too. But there is sufficient evidence to show that

St. Martha came to southern Gaul with her brother Lazarus, who, having once seen heaven, ceased to take interest in earthly affairs, and it was she who tamed the man-eating monster of the Rhone—the Tarasque which gave its name to Tartarin's town, and whose dragon form, with human limbs sticking from its mouth, peers from the capitals of St. Trophimus of Arles, and many other old cloisters. She tamed him and led him about by her apron-string as quiet as a lamb. Yet, conspicuous as were the good works by which St. Martha benefited mankind, no one forgets that she was a minor saint, compared to her sister St. Mary, who was saved by grace and not by works, feeding that mind of hers in a wise passiveness, and neither taming Tarasques nor cooking them.

Minor saints, minor poets—the whole of this country of Languedoc and Provence has been full of them. They are the great benefactors of mankind. The times that produce great saints and great poets can look after themselves. When St. Francis or Dante is at work, no one is likely to forget the worship of the Holy Ghost. But it is during the years when the spirit of man burns low, when people live and die with souls unkindled, wallowing in the common round, the daily task, the struggle for an average and uninspired existence—it is then that the minor saint, the minor poet, fulfil their benefaction and maintain the tradition of that holy spirituality which neither strives, nor cries, nor pays.

Those troubadours of Languedoc and Provence

were not great poets. Except for a few dusty students of literature, their songs have departed this life. But the world's debt to them, as to all minor poets, is inestimable. Not only their useless rhymes, but their fantastic lives, their wandering devotion, their purchase of the intangible wealth of love by the intangible wealth of the spirit—all these things helped to maintain the variety, the eccentricity, the infinite quality in man's soul, without which characteristics mankind would wear a drab and homespun look. So when I came to Carcassone it was a delight to find a youth still so deeply absorbed in the study of the Troubadours, from Bertran de Born down to Sordello, whom Dante found in purgatory with mien like a couchant lion, that for him the singers and their bright ladies seemed hardly to have passed away.

He was living up in the Cité or old town—two miles or so from the living town of squares and station. That living town is a beautiful place too, and on its Place Carnot it possesses an eighteenth-century fountain, which the boots at the hotel implored me not to miss, because it displayed "I know not what of artistic feeling in the pose of the figures." To me also, a mere barbarian, there seemed I know not what of artistic feeling in those Tritons and mermaids, and even in the pathetic Latin elegiacs in which they expressed their emotions about fountains and groves, and the tears of mortality. But there are no Tritons or mermaids languishing over the Cité. It stands on its hill above the Aude—restored, to be sure, by Viollet-

CARCASONNE, CITÉ

"THE fortified towns of Carcasonne and Aigues Mortes, and, in the North, Fougères, retain as much of their walled defences as almost any place in Europe. The former in particular, both from its situation and the extent of its remains, gives a singular, favourable, and impressive idea of the grave majesty of an ancient fortalice."—*J. Fergusson.*

Plate 14

le-Duc, like St. Sernin of Toulouse and other noble places—but still unchanged in its character of true mediæval town, girt around with towers and double walls, just as when the English battered against it in vain. The castle still echoes with soldiery. The cathedral, hung with resplendent glass and carved with the finest humours and monsters of French wit, still serves the people for christening, marriage, and death. The little streets, huddled together anyhow so as to win the protection of towers and walls, are still the people's daily homes, and in one of those little streets dwells a Troubadour as full of minor poetry and delicate romance as was the Guillem de Cabestaing, whose romantic heart was set as a dainty meal before his lady Margarida by her husband Raymond de Roussillon—a queer way of regaining her affection, but all the ways of men are queer.

The little fellow with the thin pale face and crest of feathery hair was standing in his garret, the wide windows looking far over the brilliant plain below.

"It is the Feast of Pentecost to-day," he cried, "and see what I have found. It was tucked away in an old book among the cathedral papers in the room over the porch. The draft of a letter from a Troubadour, written on the Feast of Pentecost, I cannot say when. I have deciphered it, and just finished the translation. Look!"

He gave me a sheet of his own minute and beautiful writing.

"I cannot fix the authorship," he said, "but the

poet appears to have been wandering in the north, and to have just returned to Carcassone from his journey. At all events, he writes to ladies in a strange land—to ladies observe! It is the use of the plural that pervades his words with a naïve innocence and the charm of a truthful heart."

In English the letter might read: "Given at Carcassone. The Feast of Pentecost, at dawn, in the second year of my salvation:

"Ladies sweet and of great courtesy, I write from the far-off land, which is your proper heritage. When I think upon all the fair ladies who have dwelt here in olden time, so full of gentilesse and loving kindliness to all whom they found worthy of their mind, I know that among their company you might have stood, and no one be seen more fair and more generous of heart. Meditating on these things, I have slept no more this night than the nightingale, being awake with joy to remember how good a thing it is to be alive at the same time with you, and not at a different time in the long history of beautiful women, which might so easily have happened. Wherefore I thank all the dear lovers who, through thousands of years, have handed down life to me, having great solace of each other, as I hope. And if they are now in hell, which is most likely, I pray they be not too far apart, for then they shall take no thought of burning pitch or of piercing ice, or of the exultation of the blessed.

"But that the knights and goodly clerks, the shepherds and hunters wild who came before me

had such joy as mine, is a vain hope, seeing it is granted few men to reach the height of fortune and move among the stars. For myself it hung but on a hair that I might never have come into your presence, but have remained churlish and of bitter heart, longing for things never found, seeking satisfaction in lukewarm passions and unimpassioned deeds, ignorant of sweet courtesy, and of the purifying fire, and of the smiling mouth.

"This cherished land, which is your natural home, lies open to the sun, full of delight in the renewed union after the severance of winter. All the fields are spread with flowers, and when I see the daisies, I think of your feet. It is the Vigil of the Holy Ghost, whose knight I am, being yours, and the villagers are now getting up to celebrate His excellent gifts with offerings of kindly fruits and the promise of the vine. But I nurture myself upon your noble and generous thoughts, and by their aid I grow strong and of good liking in spirit.

"Riding upon my way back into the south, I followed your counsel and left the encumbrances of my northern raiment bit by bit behind me. The roads are marked with them as with trophies. When it came to the jerkin's turn to go, I hung it on an acacia tree honey-sweet with flowers, and to the place under which my heart was wont to beat I fixed a featly written rhyme, bidding the passer-by wear it in winter if he would, but never hope to feel the glow that once was there until he met such gentle ladies as had filled it with flame, which

God him grant. And that night I came into Carcassone in light array, and remained well-nigh naked till the sun rose, but took no hurt, seeing that I fell asleep enumerating the rosary of your sweet courtesies. Of the which it is my prayer to live worthily and so to die."

The young scholar watched me whilst I read, and at the end, with some hesitation, he produced another page on which he had copied the old Provencal words without translation.

"I think," he said, "that this must be the written verse he pinned to the garment. But if I told you I found it sticking to an acacia tree, perhaps you would hardly credit that, though you are an honest man and of good judgment, and such an one, as Rabelais says, believeth still what is told him, and that which he finds written."

The verse, in English words which follow the old metre, might run :

Comfort the beggar old,
Cover the fox from cold,
Let the sad wanderer
Wrap her new babe in thee,
And to the birds of air
  Soft bedding be ;
But tell the way-worn lover
In thee he'll not discover
Such warmth as quickened into flame
  The heart that once beat here,
But only in the hearts of ladies dear
Whereto, God granting, once I came,
And God grant him the same.

On returning to the living town of Carcassone, I found the streets and squares and gutters gasp-

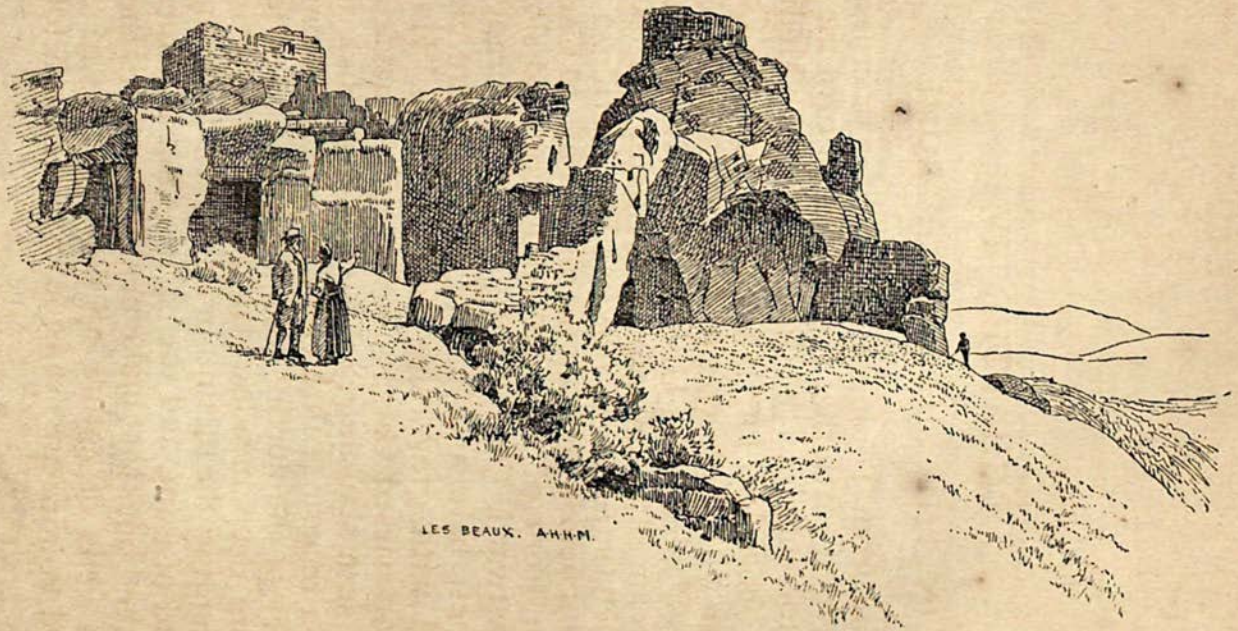
PERPIGNAN, GATEWAY IN THE FORTIFICATIONS

Plate 15

ing in the heat. The dogs were too languid to catch the flies, the oxen panted in the dust, men and women sat motionless, longing only for evening and a breath from the Pyrenees. The one moving figure on the main square was the town-crier, who, with trumpet and bell, crept from corner to corner, blew his trumpet, rang his bell, and uttered this stirring announcement: "This afternoon in St. Remy's Mead, in commemoration of the Holy Pentecost, a grand match of football Rugby—the men of Carcassone against the men of Castelnaudary—coup d'envoi punctually at three."

What a people! How impassioned for sport and manly vigour!

And what a language! "Dog show" becomes "Exposition canine." "Kick-off" becomes "Coup d'envoi." It makes the sweating game into a ballade.


LES BEAUX. AHH-M.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE SHADOW OF ROME

THE road from Toulouse hardly rises to cross the low curve of earth that just serves to turn the Pyrenean torrents into the Garonne or to the Mediterranean shore. So low is the curve that the Canal du Midi will carry you over it by water and you can pass, asleep like Ulysses, from the inhospitable stream of ocean into the civilising sea. A few bargemen, superior to fret and haste, still go that way. But before you see the towers of old Carcassone in front of you, the land begins to slope a little eastward. On the left glimmers the range of Cevennes, bare and purple. Its feet are thinly covered with grey olive and dark ilex. Hardly have you passed Carcassone when a black stone-pine is seen standing solitary in a reddish field, and you recognise that you have escaped from the greenery of the north. No more mosses and ferns, no more deep meadows, or bosky woods, or fir-trees jagging the mountain lines. We have reached the land of form, and the earth is not ashamed to show the bones that make her skeleton. All the uncertain veils of nature, all her fripperies of skirting and flounce are set aside. She stands before us

dressed as a Spartan girl, "with gleaming thighs," and we have reached the classic land.

As yet it is the land that is classic and not the towns. Even when we get to Narbonne there is nothing left to mark the place as the home of Cæsar's Tenth Legion—the boys of the old brigade whom he settled there to enjoy a life of memories and hold the road to Spain, as Perpignan holds it now. There is no record left of what the old soldiers thought when some one told them their general had been murdered in Rome—no record of Rome at all, unless stones in dismal museums are records. High above the canal bridges rise the towers of the Archbishop's palace and the variegated mass of St. Just's choir—buttresses, pinnacles, and windows, too complex in design, perhaps too flimsy, ever to be finished. It was not so that the Romans built.

Only the land is classic, and it has silted up. Salt marsh and dusty vineyards are now encroaching upon the inlet where the harbour used to run. But the dark line of the Mediterranean fills the space between the headlands not far away, and wherever that dark line is seen there is classic land, and the memory of the greatest things that man has done. Keeping that line on our right, as we leave Narbonne, we gradually approach the actual shore, and the road leads us along narrow spits of beach among the lagoons of Cette, till we are just on the edge of the Camargue desert, where the pounded dust of the Alps has been for ages slowly spread out by the Rhone. As fit sentinel

NARBONNE, "LE CANAL DES DEUX MERS"

WHICH connects the Atlantic with the Mediterranean, flows through the centre of the town. "Approached by the steps on the left is a small market-place, where congregate old women under awnings and big umbrellas, ricketty tables piled high with fruit, white caps and brown faces, blouses, sabots, donkeys. Beneath this picture was another—a long row of washerwomen on their knees on the edge of the canal, pounding and wringing the dirty linen of Narbonne."—*Henry James.*

Plate 16

over that dead and beautiful waste, haunted by rare birds and rarer men, stands Aigues Mortes, Carcassone's only rival as the mummy of a mediæval town. So mummified is it that the people have built another little town nearer to the stream of life, and called it Aigues Vives, not in mockery of St. Louis's old port, but simply as a statement of fact.

There the road to Italy, being unable to cross the desert of salt marsh and lagoon or the two rushing estuaries of the river, is driven inland, and it is possible to get through by St. Gilles and Arles, rivals in the splendour of their church porches. But perhaps the better way is to follow the big road round by Nîmes, and enjoy with thankfulness the sight of another classic city which else would be missed.

There is a kindred feeling about all these cities which still lie under the protecting shadow of the Roman name. Almost from Lyons downwards, they are found at intervals along the great Rhone valley—Vienne, Orange, Carpentras, St. Rémy, Arles, and Nîmes—they were not the largest cities even in Roman times, and their unimportance has preserved a history lost in Lyons, Avignon, and Marseilles; just as Mycenæ by her destruction has preserved a history which would have been lost in the growth of a living town. Triumphal arches, theatres, amphitheatres, aqueducts, baths, and temples of the gods have all been so much imitated by ages which, having no natural style of their own, have worked in jumbles of every style, that it is difficult now to

realise the people to whom that grand method of building was as natural as the French cathedral was to the thirteenth century, or the suburban street is to ourselves. The entablatures and columns of Roman arches have helped to build the hovels around them. Their statues have been a mark for the arrows of savages and the zeal of saints. Yet the ruins deserted in the grass are nobler monuments than the world has since devised, and we strive in vain to understand the unquestioning self-confidence that drove an unknown people on seven unhealthy little hills to impose their peace upon the world and mark their conquests by such memorials among the conquered. An unimaginative people, unpleasing in intercourse and legal in virtue, how did it occur to them that, as a matter of course, they should rule mankind and build for eternity? Those amphitheatres at Arles and Nîmes have served as fortresses for orientals and as ant-hills for broods of barbarians. Kings have tried to burn them down, and children have nested in their caves. Yet still they stand almost unchanged, and week by week they afford the enjoyment of pitiless torture to crowds as bloodthirsty as the people for whom they were built. How did the Romans conjecture cruelty's immortality, or foresee that mankind would feel perennial joy in the stream of blood, the faltering strength, the bowels entangled about the feet?

It is one of the worst of Rome that progressive civilisation has suffered to survive. The Games alone are the plays unequalled for their com-

bination of cowardice and slaughter by any form of cruelty, except our own pigeon-shooting, still draw the holiday crowds. But the beautiful theatre at Arles is a ruin, and Menander's imitators are little more than a name. Arch above arch, high over the vale of Gardon, the great aqueduct of the Pont du Gard still supports its channel of cement and has hardly lost a stone. Through tangles of clematis and honeysuckle, I have followed for miles the rock-cut groove that used to guide its water to Nîmes. But Nîmes is satisfied to go thirsty and filthy now. The sacred spring in her garden still fills the Roman baths to the brim with clear water. Here in these curving pools the men used to bathe, and there under the columned vestibules the women. But no superstitious sanctity now lingers over the spring, and, as the modern Greeks say, the christened body needs no bath.

"My friend," said Faust to Wagner, "the ages of the past are to us a book with seven seals." It is in vain we try to glance into those pages. The strange thing is that we are all convinced the writing still is there if only we could see it, whereas in reality it is not there, nor anywhere at all. Chiefly at the sight of the temples of our forefathers, I think, we are moved by this unanswerable curiosity. Close beside the baths at Nîmes is a church built for the Nymphs, probably during the life of Christ. It does not in the least interest us to know the size of the stones, though they are large, or the nature of the decoration, though it is said to be good. But we would give much to

know what the builders really thought about the Nymphs, what the priests thought who were paid for their service, what the people thought who came to their worship. Or that temple to Augustus and Livia at Vienne, built also while Christ was still wandering among the holy fields—what kind of deities did the Romans in Gaul really think that riddle of a man and his wife to be? They called him divine and immortal; they pictured him drinking nectar in heaven with rosy mouth; but did the temple mean to them any more than the Albert Memorial with its golden image means to us? Or that Corinthian "Maison Carrée," another of the joys of Nîmes, erected about the time when Lucian was beginning to smile at things—had the builders a god to put in it? Or was it set up only as an additional attraction to a watering-place, like the immense cathedral which the pious proprietors of the gaming-tables have just finished at Monaco, and can find no god to suit?

Let us not allow these intrusive questionings to ruffle the sense of peace that pervades this land as though anticipating "the eventual element of calm." In the Province, if anywhere, we may recall the still and golden light shed through the old world by the virtuous absolutism of Trajan and the Antonines. We all know the words of the historian:

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that

NÎMES, ROMAN BATHS

Now part of the Public Gardens, laid out in the time of Louis XIV. "The sacred spring in the garden still fills the Roman baths to the brim with clear water. Here in these curving pools the men used to bathe."

Plate 17

NIMES.

which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus.*

This is the scene in which we can best imagine those generations of ripe, autumnal quietude, when the stir of spring and the trouble of summer were passed, and decade followed decade like golden days after the harvest. There was no more of the known world to conquer, no reason for uncomfortable courage to blow its bugle in the night, no incalculable breath of genius to utter its troublesome cry. All mankind under the shadow of Rome were eating, sleeping, and producing young in peace and plenty such as our own governors and politicians are continually desiring. Man was following the advice of those cautious sages who bade him, being mortal, to mind mortal things, nor to seek from the world a thought more than the world can give. It did not last long—some eighty years or so—but in a land like this many must have been slow to recognise the signs of coming change or admit an interruption in those placid days of comforting limitations. Perhaps the majority have never admitted it, and still lie at rest under the shadow of Rome.

The barbarians have come and gone; the Saints have come and gone; so have the Popes. The Province has been the spoil of every mongrel herd and almost every kingdom of Europe in turn; but it still retains its peace, its element of calm. In returning from scenes of distress and warfare in the East, many a passing Englishman must have

* Gibbon, chap. iii.

forgotten, like myself, all about the blessings of war as he gazed with pleasurable relaxation upon the blessings of Provençal peace. Just above Avignon there is a lonely pyramid of mountain whose southern slopes have long seemed to me the very emblem of the beatified husbandman's joy. Even now that I know its name of Mont Ventoux, and have read how Petrarch climbed it one leisurely day when he had no sonnet to write, it has not lost its charm, but remains as an earnest of human happiness and busy, quiet hours spent among vineyards, olive-yards, and fields of corn.

Beside the vast stream of the river stands the towered city of Avignon, resounding with bells. Her walls still encircle her, except where the white cliff crowned with trees falls sharply to the river bank. With arched buttresses or fathoms of sheer and uninterrupted stone-work, the immense Palace of the Popes rises like a cliff itself beside the old cathedral where the Popes were crowned. High above all, golden in the golden sun, gleams the statue of the Virgin upon the cathedral's western tower. I know it is modern, and artists say it is too large, but to me she has always appeared to watch over the city with head gently inclined, and to gather all the country round in her graciously outstretched arms. Almost from the very centre of the plain she looks over the varied fields of lucerne and corn and teasle. The vine grows there, but has to contend against clumps of mulberry-trees with their delicate green. In solemn lines of black the pointed cypresses stand, planted close

together and grown tall to protect the produce, just as we grow hedges in Kent to protect the hops; for this is the land of the mistral that sweeps from the north-west and makes the whole world dance upon the bridge of Avignon—such a non-descript bridge as the world must dance on now, for on the grand old bridge of St. Bénezet, if you dance past his chapel and the fourth arch, you plunge headlong into the river, just for want of the other fifteen arches that used to carry you across.

Over the stream, to keep the Popes in order, rises the fortress of Villeneuve, and behind the fortress you may discover the relics of the Chartreuse du Val de Bénédiction, with fragments of cloister almost akin to the renowned cloisters of Elne or St. Trophimus of Arles; and as picturesque a human swinery is littered among those ruins as the heart of a cheerful man could desire. Scattered over the whole plain are remnants of ecclesiastic buildings—farms now, or country houses almost deserving the title of châteaux, with dignified avenues of lime-trees leading up to the old stone gateways. There are many of them, though none are so great as the massed ruins of a thousand years that stand on the ancient island of Mont Majour near Arles, and show the whole progress of Christianity from the hermit's hole to the palace of the seventeenth-century princes of the Church and the fires of the Revolution.

But from Avignon the Mont Majour lies behind that delicate row of dwarf mountains called the Alpilles or Alpines—the same on which Tartarin

practised his nerve for the Jungfrau. Bare and scarred, they take every brilliant colour from the sun and sky, but their prevailing colour is deep violet touched with rose. They are of the kind that the early painters loved—the blue kind, low but shapely, that we see as suitable backgrounds for Virgins, Saints, and Angels in so many pictures of Flanders, Lombardy, or Umbria. Indeed, they are of the kind which all the artists must love who love the happy human race better than the overwhelming crags where death and morning walk, and man has always been gloomy, poor, and in danger. Though not nearly so large as the Greek mountains, they win the same sense of scale and colour from their sculptured shape and bareness. They have, too, upon them the touch of the wild, which is rare in France, and, as on the Greek hills, rosemary, lavender, and magic herbs full of poignant savours grow in the crevices of their stones. They are the mountains of a classic land.

Up among the summits of those low hills stands all that is left of Les Baux, whose princes counted for much during the centuries when France was struggling into life. In the main their dwellings, their castle chambers, and even their churches were dug in the white and shelly rock, like the nests of mason bees. It is much the same kind of rock as is scooped out like cheese along the roadside from there to Arles, and is famous as the Arles stone. In fact, the few poor relics of a population still left among the vestiges of old romance at Les Baux exist only by quarrying the mountain

away; and if a queen's bedroom cuts up well into blocks, into blocks it is cut up.

One afternoon I was on the topmost cliff, admiring the asphalte slope which the people have plastered over the mountain grass to catch every drop of rain and guide it into a cistern. For there is no water at Les Baux nearer than the depth of a neighbouring valley, and how the gentle knights and ladies managed, it is better only guessing. To the south-west lay Arles and the vast waste of Camargue, attractive in its desolation. To the south-east, stretching towards Aix and Marseilles, was the other desert of La Crau—a stony desert instead of salt marsh and greenish bog. There you may see the mirage as on the veldt, and there, as on the veldt, I have wondered how any traveller more mature than the baby of a girl could mistake a mirage for anything but what it was.

"Monsieur desires a guide no doubt?" said a soft voice behind me. "If monsieur would have the goodness to take me as his guide!"

She was one of the beautiful Greek or Italian women that are supposed to be so common in Provence, but are not common. To beauty like hers it would have been impossible to refuse one's soul without extreme impoliteness. So, holding a whimpering girl of three by one hand, she led the way through the holes and corners of the past, and as she went she uttered her innocent commentary in a gentle and almost unvarying voice:

"On this flat space they celebrated the tournaments in ancient times. You can see the wall

running round the lists, as they were called. The knights entered from each side, and the knight who killed the other received a prize from the Queen of Beauty. This is where she sat.

"My husband is ill. That is why I am now a guide. You do not think I should be a guide if my husband could work!

"This is the Pavilion of Queen Jeanne. She was the last of the ancient Châtelaines, in whose praise the Troubadours sang, and she married King Réné of Anjou, who was also King of Sicily, Jerusalem, and other countries.

"I must do what I can to keep our little household together. One can't make much, so few people climb up here, and the children learn all about the ruins at school and rob me. But I must do what I can.

"This is where the Court of Love held its sittings in the time of the great princes. Only ladies were allowed to be present at the meetings, and they issued regulations upon the nature of love.

"My husband is struck by our disease. It is a kind of paralysis. We think it comes from the damp of living up here. There is no water, but it is always damp. It may come from the dust of the stone. He is a quarryman. Every one is a quarryman.

"The Court of Love also decided difficult cases of love, when a knight loved a lady or a lady loved a knight and there were obstacles. One of their principles was that real love cannot exist between married people.

"My husband cannot move his legs, poor man.

NÎMES, VIEW OF THE COUNTRY SOUTH

"THESE veteran olives are gnarled, split and twisted trunks, throwing out arms that break into a hundred branches. At a distance the same olives look hoary and soft—a veil of woven light or luminous haze. When the wind blows their branches all one way, they ripple like a sea of silver."—*J. A. Symonds.*

Plate 18

He used to bring in three to four francs a day, and I can't make that even in summer.

"At the Courts of Love the best knight or poet was crowned by the Queen of Love with a circlet of peacock feathers, and she gave him a kiss as well.

"I am just twenty-four, and my husband twenty-six. It is not so very old. I think one ought to have some enjoyment of life.

"It was in this chamber, cut out of the solid rock, that a star descended from heaven to shine above the deathbed of the last princess, Alix des Baux, and was extinguished at her latest breath. The decoration is of the fourteenth century.

"The worst of all is that our little boy is suffering of the disease already. He is only four, and one side of his poor little body is growing stiff. The girl is well at present. I have to take her, because the school is shut and she loves me.

"I have read that our Provencal poet, Monsieur Mistral, has written an admirable and touching explosion of enthusiasm upon the Courts of Love at Les Baux.

"For me, no, I do not suffer from the same disease. I suffer from poverty. Do you think that nothing?

"This is the ancient church, cut in the solid rock. It is of the twelfth century. This is the house of a Protestant of the sixteenth century. He used part of it as a temple. You can read 'Post Tenebras Lux' over the window—'After Darkness Light.'

"Who knows what may happen? Perhaps I shall go to Paris. But now I must keep our little household together. If ever you desire to hear more about the ruins, it will be a pleasure to see you again. As you go down the valley, turn into that farm where there is water. You will find a vaulted Hall of Pleasure there, built by Queen Jeanne. It is of the fifteenth century."

I did not see the Hall of Pleasure. I was trying to recall the famous passage in praise of women by the traveller Ledyard, a battered old friend of Captain Cook. It is of the eighteenth century:

> I have observed among all nations [he says] that the women ornament themselves more than the men; that, wherever found, they are the same civil, kind, obliging, humane, tender beings; that they are ever inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and modest. They do not hesitate like men to perform a hospitable or generous action; not haughty, nor arrogant, nor supercilious, but full of courtesy and fond of society; industrious, economical, ingenuous; more liable, in general, to err than man, but in general, also, more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. I never addressed myself, in the language of decency and friendship, to a woman, whether civilised or savage, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it has often been otherwise.

I do not know how the days and thoughts of women in the Provinces were occupied in Roman times. Did they regard all the municipal affairs that engaged their husbands—all that talk about drainage and public buildings and registration—as a little tedious? Pardonably tedious, for men must be engaged upon something or they become a nuisance in the house; and that is why we have Borough Councillors.

"Ah! the men! I know them!" said an old lady at Avignon to me, not in hatred or contempt, but just with that half-loving, half-pitying sympathy we feel for a child happy among its toys.

I cannot say, but it seems likely that the women of the Province thought those accurate and public-spirited Romans a little irrelevant. Perhaps it is not possible to draw the line that some would draw between the Love of the Ancients and Romantic Love. Within recorded time, the forces of attraction and hostility between men and women have very likely been much the same. But if the distinction may be allowed, we find it early and plainly marked in the valley of the Rhone. Women should never forget what they owe to the town of Mâcon, which is really in the same valley. My theological friends tell me it was the Council of Mâcon which decided that women were human beings. The question before the Council was whether women had souls. That point was left open; but the subsidiary dogma was fixed for ever, and since that Council in the middle of the sixth century it has been quite possible to remain a good Catholic and yet to doubt no more than the rest of mankind that women are practically of the same species as ourselves.

It was a great advance, for there was no suggestion at the Council that women belonged to a higher species, as subsequent poets have heretically taught. Yet the Council had close before them some very remarkable instances of women saints. It was only five centuries since St. Martha had

tamed the monstrous Tarasque of the Rhone, and St. Mary Salome, St. Mary the mother of St. James the Less, and St. Mary Magdalene had landed together on the shores of the Camargue. Except for the Ephesian St. Trophimus, of whom we know nothing for certain except that he was sickly,* all the chief saints of this region were women. And woman's influence appears always to have remained peculiarly strong in the district, as though in protest against the unimaginative and parochial habits of Romanised officials. We need not call up the ghosts of Yolande and Etiennette, Adélarie of Avignon, and Cécile, who was called Passe-Rose or Hollyhock. They have left only the fragrance of their names. They have not left so much even as the princess whose masses of golden hair were lately quarried out from her stone coffin at Les Baux. But of other Provencal women we still know something, and it was at Grignan, just north-east of Orange, that Madame de Sévigné died, for that was the home of the equable daughter to whom she wrote all those letters of ecstatic motherhood.

And then there is Laura. It was at Avignon she lived all these years, occupied in a married woman's usual worries, while at the safe and innocent distance of Vaucluse her lover languished through the easy days, writing her praises with the satisfaction of regular employment and artistic results, nor ever wishing himself one inch nearer to danger, damnation, and domestic cares. True, he called

* 2 Timothy, iv. 20.

Love to witness that without Laura's succour he would die. He longed for the time when loss of beauty would make her more pitiful to his passion. To love her less he fled, though vainly, from the sight of her countenance. He lived alone, but Love always bore him company. He swore to love for ever the place he saw her first. He called upon her to witness the cruel agitation in which she had placed him. He proved that the unhappiness of his state was a matter of extraordinary and novel importance. He reproached himself for not having courage to say "I love you"; but wherever he lived he vowed to sigh for Laura alone. Her beautiful tears were ever in his heart. He prayed the Rhone to kiss her hands and feet. Though his body lived at Vaucluse his spirit was never there, and often he thought it was time he went to God.

But it was Laura who went to God, and on the whole it was better so. It would have been a pity if death had interrupted a poet just as he was sure of immortality, and the laurel crown sat firm upon his brow—a pity if death had interfered with his pleasing existence among the verses he cherished and the women who bore him bastards. It was Laura who went to God, and though her lover consulted Love upon the advisability of following her at once, there were many consolations in staying behind for a while to sing her praises, as Love advised. For one thing, death gave his verses quite a new turn, and that is always delightful. "Why are the Muses melancholy?" asked old Burton, but it were long to trace the causes to affections of the

spleen and gall, such as may be treated with pounded hellabore and woodlice. The Muses are melancholy because all except the greatest of them choose the line of least resistance, and melancholy is ever the easiest passage for counterfeit emotion. When the news of Laura's death reached Petrarch at Verona, he feared his occupation would be gone. In a day or two he had begun to sing:

Alas, the lovely face, the suave regard!

In a week he beheld a whole new ocean of sorrow stretching before him, and with an explorer's joy he launched his boat of verse upon the melancholy wave. It was not thus that the other poet broke off his words upon the humility of love with the cry, "Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo!" and of the news of Beatrice's death he said no more.

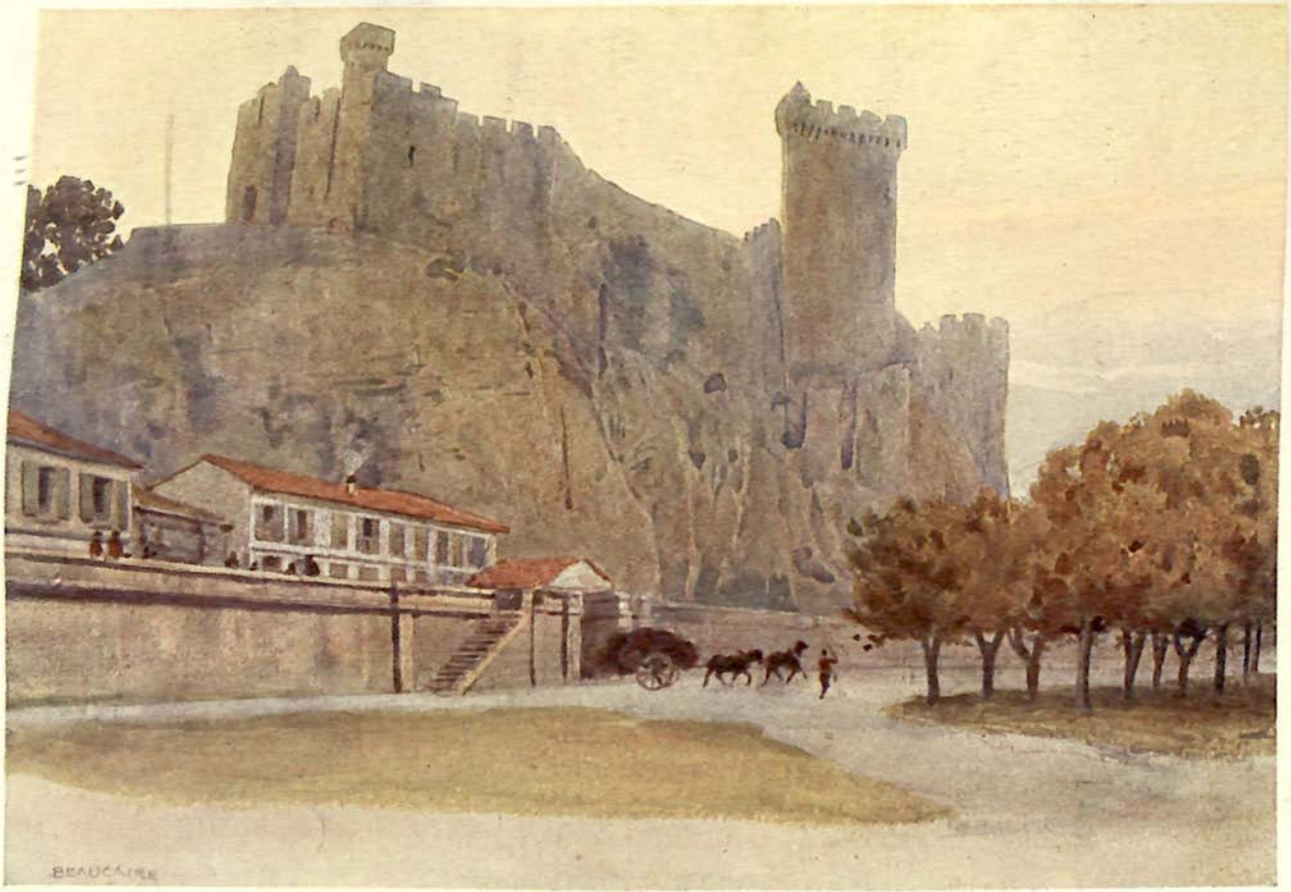
But Laura! Though her portrait is in Florence, and Arthur Young saw her tomb, I am inclined to think there never was such a person. Or, if there was, I bless for her sake every yard of that safe and innocent twenty mile which separates Avignon from Vaucluse, and I have not the least doubt her lover blessed it for his own sake too.

Let us not go that road, but rather let the great river swim us down to the Castle of Beaucaire, in which two indubitable lovers once had their dwelling. For the father of Aucassin was lord of Beaucaire, and Aucassin was a lover indeed. Hear again how, in the famous old tale, he answered those who refused him Paradise if he persisted in loving the Paynim girl?

BEAUCAIRE, TWELFTH-CENTURY CASTLE

An ancient possession of the Counts of Toulouse, the scene of the Romance of "Aucassin and Nicolette." It was in this castle of Beaucaire that Nicolette was imprisoned that May night when she thought upon her lover. "Then she arose and put on a mantle of silk she had by her. . . . She came to the garden gate and unbarred it, and went through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping always on the shadowy side, for the moon was shining clear, and so she wandered till she came to the tower where her lover lay."

Plate 19


BEAUCAIRE

"In Paradise," he said, "what have I to win? Therein I seek not to enter, but only to have Nicolete, my sweet lady that I love so well. . . . But into Hell would I fain go; for into Hell fare the goodly clerks, and goodly knights that fall in tourneys and great wars, and stout men at arms, and all men noble, and thither pass the sweet ladies and courteous that have two lovers, or three, and their lords thereto. Thither goes the gold, and the silver, and the cloth of vair, and cloth of gris, and harpers, and poets, and the prince of this world. With these I would gladly go, let me but have with me Nicolete, my sweetest lady."

It was in this Castle of Beaucaire also that Nicolete was lying imprisoned that May night when she thought upon her lover, and on the old Count who in his hatred intended to drown or burn her up. Once more let us recall that passage which every one now knows:

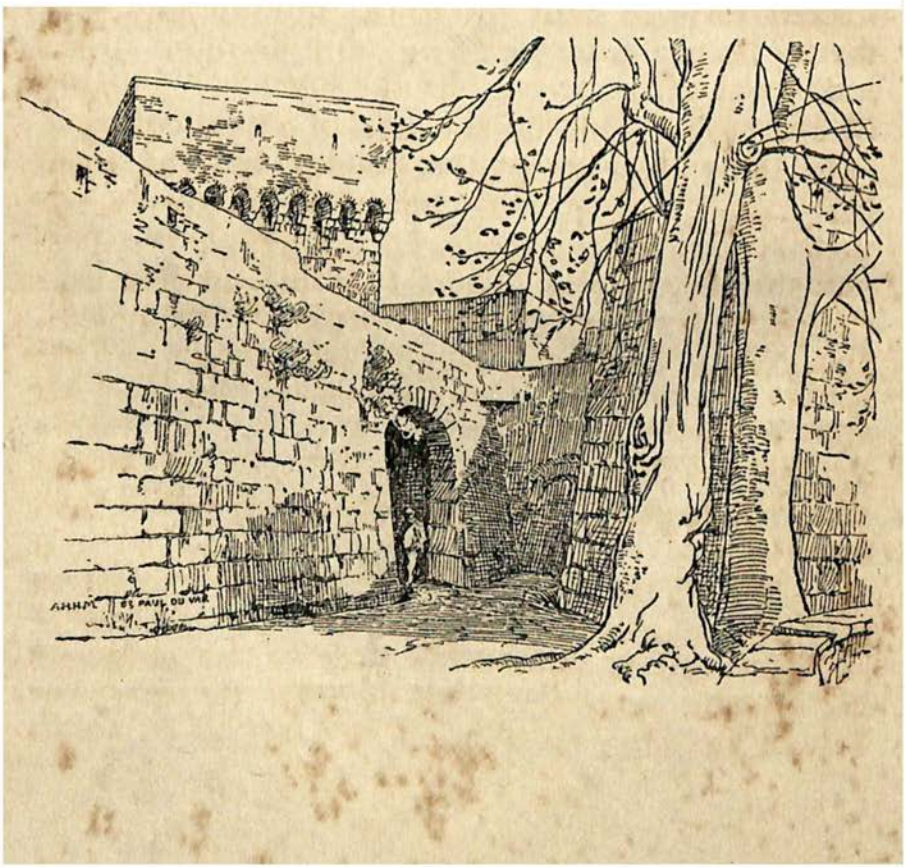
Then she arose and put on a mantle of silk she had by her, and took the bed-clothes and towels, and knotted them together like a cord as far as they would go, and she tied the end to a pillar in the window, and let herself slip down into the garden. Then she caught up her gown in both hands, behind and before, and kilted up her kirtle, because of the dew that was lying deep on the grass, and so down through the garden she went her way.

Her hair was yellow in small curls, her smiling eyes blue-green, her face featly fashioned, the lips more red than cherries or roses in summer, her teeth white and small; her breasts so firm that they bore up the folds of her bodice as though they had been two apples. So slim she was in the waist that your two hands might have clipped her, and the daisies that broke beneath her steps seemed black against her feet; the girl was so white!

She came to the garden gate and unbarred it, and went out through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping always on the shadowy side, for the moon was shining clear, and so she wandered till she came to the tower where her lover lay.*

* Andrew Lang's translation of "Aucassin and Nicolete," with a few alterations, chiefly from Walter Pater's "Renaissance."

In those pictures we have come far from the official virtues of Roman municipality. Something rich and strange has been added to the Roman Venus. From the Church Councillors of Mâcon we have come further still. And yet perhaps it was just the rigour of the Church that was needed, to give to these aspects of life that delicacy of reserve, that secret mysteriousness of emotion, which appeared early in Provence, and does make some distinction between the ancients and ourselves, if any distinction in our favour may be allowed.



CHAPTER V

THE OLD COAST ROAD

CROSSING the long Rhone Bridge which binds together the opposite and hostile natures of Beaucaire and Tarascon without hope of divorce, I looked forward with joy to the humours of Tartarin's home. After those moonlit emotions of the mediæval girl, one felt like the lover in "Parting at Morning"—one felt the need of a world of men. And there, just across the flood, stood the stout castle of Tarascon, with its swelling towers, the very symbol of the man who was reputed to possess double muscles. There I should find the irrepressible converse, the sun-warmed temperament, the gorgeous vision, the mirage of the mind that builds the lofty lie. There I should find the men who save the world from dreariness, the rebels against the despotism of fact, the eyes that in the daily round perceive something more splendid than reality.

I entered the town with the cheerful relaxation of a bank clerk entering a music-hall after a lecture on Botticelli. I passed the ancient church where S. Martha rests from her labours for ever, the tamed Tarasque sleeping at her feet. The south

door is a wonder of beauty, even among the doorways of Provence. I passed the museum where the skeleton of Tartarin's camel stands for the instruction of youth and the perpetuation of fame. I passed his little house, the third on the left upon the Avignon road. The garden walls were still neatly whitewashed. The exotic trees kept their labels and had grown high. The perilous edge of the fountain's basin tempted an adventurous foot. A brazen blunderbus with a chained stopper in the muzzle protruded from the porch. On the balcony an elderly servant was engaged in some domestic rite, and with beating heart I perceived she was shaking out the skin of the blind lion to preserve it from moth. I glanced at all the windows, but the hero himself was invisible. Alas! he could not choose but be old, and I passed on.

Eager to find myself among his prototypes, and mix with that exuberant society which so confidingly welcomed his adventures, I entered a large restaurant, already crowded for déjeuner. But at the doorway I paused astonished. Except for the clatter of the meal, all was silent as the tomb. Each man was seated in his place—evidently his habitual place—napkin tucked over collar, a bottle of wine at his side, and a piece of bread to prop up his knife and fork, but not a word was spoken. Each knew his neighbour perfectly well; they had probably taken meals side by side for weeks and months together, but a family party in England would be conversational in comparison. Each was full of good-nature and politeness; all belonged to a

TARASCON, THE CASTLE

"STANDS, on a rock which rises but little above the level of the river; begun by Louis of Provence in the fourteenth century, it was finished by King René in the fifteenth. There is here a curious mixture of the Southern square tower with the Northern round form." —*Macgibbon.*

Plate 20

TARASCON.

people who have brought conversation to the highest art, but among them I found at last the stillness of the central sea. It was not that they were shy before a stranger, for I had entered unobserved. I said nothing; knowing how wearisome for a native is converse with a foreigner. But they said nothing either, not even among themselves, though all were native born. Could all be commercial travellers, I wondered, preserving some jealous secret of the trade? I know to what strange habits professional devotion will drive us. A barrister soon regards the universe as a case at law. Once I sat in a circle of war correspondents who did not dare to open their lips for fear of betraying a piece of information which every one knew, and I remember a very Blücher of journalists, who stood upon the burning deck and, as the ship went down with him for ever, exclaimed, "What copy!"

But no! In the silence of these men of Tarascon, there was nothing sinister or grudging. It was only their way. I had noticed it in other parts of France, though in Tarascon it was more strangely unexpected. In England we laugh at ourselves for ignoring each other's existence till we are introduced, but in France the stiffness is in reality greater. Nor is the peculiarity new; Arthur Young's experience was just the same as mine, both north and south. Writing at Rouen, he says:

Of all sombre and triste meetings a French *table-d'hôte* is foremost; for eight minutes a dead silence, and as to the politeness of addressing a conversation to a foreigner, he will look for it in

vain. Not a single word has anywhere been said to me unless to answer some question.

And, again, from Nîmes he writes

One circumstance I must remark on this numerous *table-d'hôte*, because it struck me repeatedly, which is the taciturnity of the French. I came to the kingdom expecting to have my ears constantly fatigued with the infinite volubility and spirits of the people, of which so many persons have written, sitting, I suppose, by their English firesides. At Montpellier, though fifteen persons, and some of them ladies, were present, I found it impossible to make them break their inflexible silence with more than a monosyllable, and the whole company sat more like an assembly of tongue-tied quakers than the mixed company of a people famous for loquacity. Here also, at Nîmes, with a different party at every meal, it is the same; not a Frenchman will open his lips.

It is strange. The French stand first or second among the best talkers in the world. Yet, except Turks, Boers, and an English family waiting for prayers, I have known nothing so stolidly, so complacently silent as a French *table-d'hôte*. It seems a contradiction in nature. It is almost Hegelian. It establishes the identity of opposites. After all, silence is the best training for speech, and I think more records of real conversation have been preserved from Sparta than from Athens. Or is it only that to a Frenchman dinner is a sacred rite?

In passing from the Rhone delta to reach the old coast road into Italy, it is unnecessary to go near Marseilles, where the sun shines palely through the smoke, as if burning at half-cock, and one might just as well be in the north of England. From Arles there is a road running as straight as a line for nearly thirty miles over the sunlit desert

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, ROMANESQUE ARCH IN THE ANCIENT CATHEDRAL OF ST. SAUVEUR, 1103

"SAID to have been built on part of the Temple of Apollo in the first settlement of the Romans in Gaul." —*Macgibbon.* "Aix is another of the troubadour towns. The cathedral and other buildings are strewn with relics of every style, from Corinthian days down to architecture's latest gasp."

Plate 21

of La Crau as far as Salon, and from Salon, though one road takes you southward past the lagoons to Marseilles, another leads you into Aix among pleasant hills, which show the Alps are not very far away. Aix is another of the troubadour towns, and the Latin inscription on King René's statue there is a model of mournful comfort—the comfort of a man who after irretrievable failure takes refuge in local esteem. The cathedral and other buildings are strewn with relics of every style, from Corinthian days down to architecture's latest gasp. But it is what the melodramatists of sight-seeing call "a comparatively uninteresting town." For it does not concern the enthusiasts of the picturesque that this little plain among the gentle hills was the scene of Europe's greatest crisis. Here the hosts of the Teutons were laid out as top-dressing on the fields, and European thought was delivered from a reign of universal Germanity. So let all who love the things of the spirit, and all who hold France and Italy dear, make the pilgrimage to Aix, pray for the soul of Caius Marius, and be thankful.

The road will next take you to Brignoles, and from there you may reach the coast, either by turning south to Hyères, or keeping on eastward to Fréjus, where Augustus stationed a squadron of the Roman fleet, when he was engaged in winding up the affairs of a bankrupt world. Whichever road you choose, you will soon come upon examples of the fortified hill-towns that were the chief characteristic of the Riviera before the rich classes in

England took to being invalids. All towns built on hills are beautiful, but, outside Italy herself, there are none more beautiful than these until we reach the lands of the Turk. Up and down the Illyrian and Albanian coasts, or round the Gulf of Volo, or far inland at Ochrida, Castoria, and Klissoura in Macedonia, you may find high-perched towns as fine; and perhaps, even in France, we owe most of them, to the fear of the Turk and his Mohammedan predecessors. Along the coast road, or within easy reach of it, you may count over twenty of such places—little citadels like La Garde, Hyères, Le Cannet du Luc, Grasse, Gourdon, Cagnes, Biot, St. Paul du Var, Eza, and La Turbie—and in many of them there are traditions of protection afforded by walls and cliffs against sea raiders vaguely called "the Saracens." Even Cannes and Nice and Mentone were once only hill-towns for defence. Fréjus, being on the shore, built her cathedral more like a fortified castle than a church. Antibes, where the rock is low, surrounded herself with elaborate walls long before Vauban's fort was made, and the two old watch-towers that rise from the middle of her huddled streets, still recall, even to the inhabitants, the days when Saracens and Christians cut each other's throats, with equal confidence in the holiness of their service.

It has usually been to war rather than to peace that man's constructions have owed their beauty. Except for the fear of slaughter, these rock-built cities might have spread out over shores and plains

ANTIBES

SHOWING the fortifications erected by Vauban in 1691, and the coast towards Nice. "Antibes, where the rock is low, surrounded herself with elaborate walls long before Vauban's fort was made, and the two old watch-towers that rise from the middle of her huddled streets till recall, even to the inhabitants, the days when Saracens and Christians cut each other's throats, with equal confidence in the holiness of their service."

Plate 22

with the easy hideousness of Wandsworth or Peckham. But the Riviera has plenty of peace now. For restful security and comfort, no pig-sty could rival it. Admirable villas, hotels, and boarding-houses, supplied to the highest perfection with bath-rooms, and replete with sanitary arrangements, extend along the beautiful coast almost without interruption from Fréjus to Mentone. The drainage of Nice now boasts a system of automatic flushers, perhaps unequalled in the civilised world. Anglican churches abound, nor are the spiritual necessities of other Protestant congregations neglected. Circulating libraries of English novels meet the intellectual demand, and in every town there is a club or reading-room where the perusal of the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph* together with the comic and illustrated papers of his own country will make the British visitor feel absolutely at home.

It is not for us to recount the scenes of wild and picturesque revelry so carefully organised with the object of cheering the invalid on his way to the tomb, and displaying to the young and vigorous all the seductions of pleasure in their most fascinating brilliancy. Why repeat the familiar epics of plaster sugar, the battles of bought flowers, the sparkling sallies of the hired Pierrot? Exquisitely amusing as such entertainments inevitably are, we admit that they are sometimes accompanied by a cheerful abandonment which characterises the Southern nature, and we should warn English unmarried ladies and invalids whose health is not

robust, against participating in these festivities without a male escort or medical advice. But life on the Riviera offers a practically unlimited supply of other gaieties more in harmony with the genius of our race. At almost every indentation of the irregular coast-line, a lawn-tennis court is laid out where, during the intervals of the game, the lungs may be filled with the intoxicating ozone of the atmosphere, and the eye feasted on exquisite prospects of sea and mountain. During the season, thoroughly respectable private dances are given by the leaders of English fashion, and at all the great centres of resort choir-practice may be indulged in. The sea-bathing is efficiently exploited; as a rule, out of respect to English sensibility, a division is maintained between the sexes, and with a little judicious selection the mouths of the highly modernised sewers may be satisfactorily avoided. In early spring the racecourse near Cannes affords equestrian contests, which, although hardly on a level with British requirements, may assist in whiling away many a pleasant afternoon in an environment of distracting beauty. More adventurous spirits may always secure a thrill of pleasurable excitement by visiting, merely as spectators, the Casino at Monte Carlo, where the gaming-tables are in every respect admirably conducted, and no compulsion whatever is employed to enforce participation in the speculative pastime. English ladies may experience joys perhaps more congenial in contemplating the ranges of shop windows, unsurpassed for brilliance and fashion by anything

that Regent Street or the Rue de Rivoli can show, while a daily trip through the exquisite scenery of the coast, with sublime mountains on one hand, and the infinite azure of the Mediterranean on the other (reversed on return journey) comes within the limits of the humblest purse. The cheerful scream of the railway is heard as it penetrates the most precipitous cliffs, gay with variegated advertisements. The electric trams fly with ethereal shrieks round the contours of lovely bays clanging their bells far more loudly than the plague carts of old. To the sound of their merry horns, the motors thunder round the promontories, now scaling the giddy heights, now plunging to the very level of the sea, while an occasional fatal accident only adds an appetising spice of horror, as though to counteract the satiety of general joy. Should your means be insufficient to allow motoring in person, the very simplest of visitors can afford to hire a bicycle, and thus, upon the down gradients of the Cornice Road—perhaps the most celebrated for scenic beauty in the terraqueous globe—he may experience the full noise and dust and smell of his richer brethren's amusement for a very considerable distance at a comparatively trifling pecuniary sacrifice.

Among the splendours of advancing civilisation, it is hard to say which of the senses is most pitilessly violated. There is, of course, no doubt that the senses of touch and taste, which philosophers used to call the gross senses, come off best. Cooking is ever becoming more delicate, and armchairs softer.

Thus it is possible to live a whole season on the Riviera without suffering one bad meal or one external pain. But of the higher senses of sight, hearing and smell, which suffers most from the march of progress? On the whole, I think it is hearing. Sight is tortured by advancing decoration, and by the necessary destruction of all natural and artistic beauty. Smell is assaulted by oily steams, women's perfumes, and the reek of cities. But civilised man is fast losing the power of smell, and slowly losing the power of sight, so that the sufferings of these two senses will be happily counteracted by natural adaptation as they grow numb and dull. About hearing one cannot be so sure. If its sensitiveness is diminishing, the relief comes very gradually, and meantime it is continually assaulted and battered by the shrieks and screams of engines, the trumpetings of cars, the hoots of steam whistles, the clatter of wheels, the howls of town-bred voices, and all the other audible signs of that growing complexity which sociologists identify with progress and civilisation.

I sometimes think the best time to pass through the Riviera is in those few brilliant weeks when spring is just merging into summer, but earth and sky have not yet lost their sense of freshness and youthful promise. The season is then over, and the sewage of Sodom is running itself clear. Villas stand empty, with drawn blinds. We may picture the cool and darkened rooms within, silent at last. The gardens are full of flowers; they cover up the hideous verandahs, they creep through the iron

railings, and they bloom for themselves alone. The pines upon the headlands are free from picnics. You may sometimes meet a native, and the unbraced proprietors of little restaurants welcome you as a latter spring. The English chaplain, weary of saving souls, eyes you for a moment with distrust, as an uncontracted addition to his official labours. But in the loneliness of the promenade he soon relaxes, quotes Kipling, and explains how he missed his First. In the Casino you find only the most interesting of its frequenters left—the real enthusiasts, the passionate worshippers of chance, the men with a system, the women with glassy eyes. You cross the valley to the ancient rock of Monaco, and find yourself alone with its army. You have leisure to examine the one State in Europe where finance rests upon a secure basis. You wander in solitude through the new cathedral, expensive as money can make it. You wander a few steps on to the new museum, adorned with lobsters and eels in stone. You marvel at the wisdom of the one city in the world where the claims of religion and science are both equally and adequately recognised.

The nightingales still are singing, and they sing to none but you. Sometimes, as was my fortune once at Nice, you may light upon a solitary invalid still blooming, though all his lovely companions are withered and gone. It was evening, and he sat upon a bench on the sea front. The woman who was with him must have been his wife or daughter, from the way he spoke to her. His soul was much disquieted, and he was endeavouring

to explain his mental crisis, not, I think, for the first time.

"You see," he said, "it all depends on this: is my dyspepsia atonic or cerebral? If it is atonic, the air of Nice is distinctly beneficial. If it is cerebral, it is prejudicial—positively prejudicial, my dear, and every moment that we remain here is only aggravating the disorder. Two doctors have told me the origin of the malady is atonic and have advised me to remain. Only one has suggested cerebral disturbance; but he bears a high reputation as a specialist in the cerebral and digestive organs, and he strongly recommends a change to Cannes. I think on the whole we had better follow his advice. He has discovered traces of nervous irritability which he attributes to overstrain of the cerebral functions."

"Let us go, then," said the woman.

"But yet," he went on, "the other two are men of wider practical experience, and they hold an entirely opposite view of my case. They attribute the stomachic disorder entirely to an over-sensitised nervous system—a species of neurosis, in fact. I always was very sensitive; and they say the result of leaving Nice might be positively appalling."

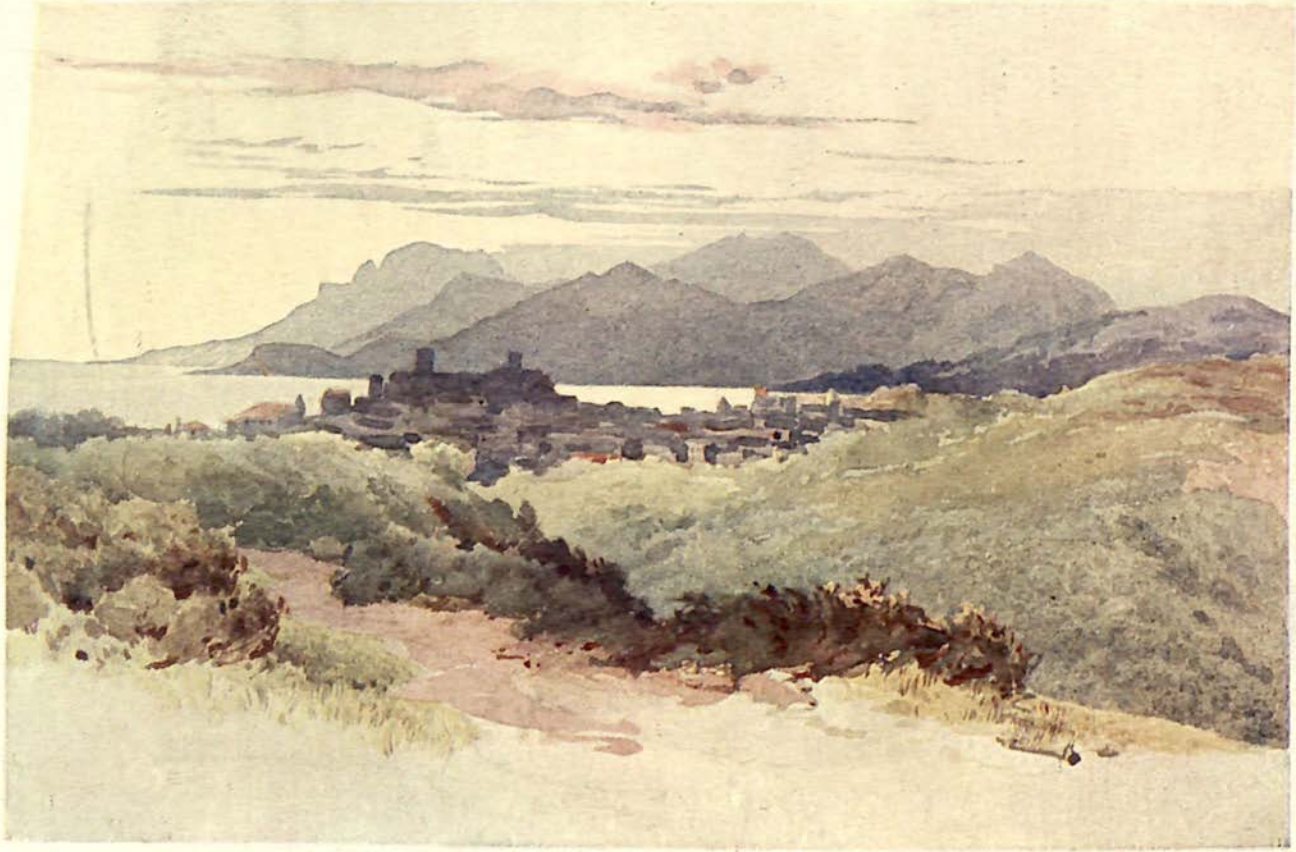
"Let us stay, then," said the woman.

"And yet, on the other hand," he continued, "I am myself inclined to suspect cerebral disturbance. My brain has always been extremely delicate. My poor mother often warned me against undue mental exertion, and I actually had to be taken away from school on that account!"

CANNES AND THE ESTÉREL MOUNTAINS

"THE fortified hill-towns were the chief characteristic of the Riviera. . . . Even Cannes and Nice and Mentone were once only hill-towns for defence. . . . All towns built on hills are beautiful, but, outside Italy herself, there are none more beautiful than these until we reach the land of the Turk."

Plate 24



O my brothers! as Carlyle used to say.

But have we no bullets left over from the slaughter of the brave?

Before they touch the towns, the streams of the Riviera are of singular purity. To be sure, the Var, which once formed Italy's frontier, is different. Like the Durance, which rushes into the Rhone between Avignon and the Alpines, it comes direct from the snowy Alps themselves, and is a devastating torrent, full of stones and slime. Helplessly capricious, unable to decide from day to day which of the fifty channels in its waste of bed it should follow, it is now shut in for miles between two straight embankments of stone. The country people almost forget it is there, and it goes to the sea unnoticed, as a man of genius, shut up in a mad asylum, goes to his death.

But the streams that rise in the nearer mountains are, as I said, of singular purity. The Loup, which flows past Cagnes, shows a perfectly transparent brown to its very mouth. So does the Siagne, near Cannes, and even the Paglione is clear till it touches Nice. A bright stream, hardly dimmed by one primitive little dye-mill a few miles up the valley, comes down to Mentone. Still higher up, it has cut itself a precipitous ravine, and the winding road far above it will lead you past its source to Sospel, which stands upon the old highway from Nice, over the Col di Tenda to Turin. Or you may cross the ravine by an ancient bridge, flung high over the gulf, like the bridges of Italy, and a stony mountain path will take you up to some of the old

hill villages, such as Castellar. Mentone itself is one of the very few places upon the coast which keeps a remembrance of its early beauty, just as you sometimes hear it said of a wealthy woman that she must have been pretty when she was a girl. But up the valleys, away from the shore, you pass very quickly into quite a different land. Lemons are the chief growth, and the sides of all the lower hills are covered with their dark and silver leaves. A little further up you see a few vines, and the slopes are terraced for the ordinary crops of maize and corn. Beyond them come the rough mountain pastures, and far higher still, the great peaks of bare and fissured rocks where the eagles build, and lines of cloud hang unmoved through the sunniest days, or thin mists continually change and vanish like smoke, and yet remain, forming ever anew.

The people themselves are still half Italian, and so are their little villages. The language is some strange growth that only themselves and their cattle understand, though they speak French well enough for politeness, and enjoy all the advantages of a public and a secret tongue. The villages, like Castellar, have grown up in dark and narrow streets for shade. The windows are set deep, and generally high up under the overhanging eaves, the lower part of the house being used for hay-loft, store-room, or cart-house, as required. Spacious vacancies that simply serve for useful cover or shade are always pleasant in a home, and perhaps it is that sense of space and shade which makes

MENTONE, OLD HOUSES

"MENTONE itself is one of the very few places upon the coast which keeps a remembrance of its early beauty . . . the people themselves are still half Italian."

Plate 25

most of the old houses of southern Europe and of Turkey so attractive. At one end of the street stands the village wine-house, where bread and garlic sausage may always be had. At the other end is the little painted church, whose white belfry can be seen from all the hills. Inside is set a blue-eyed doll Madonna, more touching and worshipful in her spangles and tawdry muslin than any Greek statue or Venetian altar-piece. And all around is the vast air, full of those unobserved and silent noises which are the music of the humble.

By keeping some eight or ten miles inland, it would still be possible, though laborious, to traverse the whole of the Riviera from Hyères to Mentone without once encroaching upon the preserves of fashion and the invalids. You would climb many fine mountains, and cross many quick rivers. You would pass through beautiful villages and small towns, possessing the architecture and the people that in this part of France are most worth seeing. Or, to follow a less ambitious plan, let us suppose that fate has taken you to Nice, and you want to reach the Italian frontier. By starting in a north-easterly direction along the bank of the Paglione, you may arrive on horseback or on foot at Sospel, and describing the arc of a beautiful parabola, you may thence descend towards Castellar, and make your way over two mountain ranges and two torrents of the gorge which forms the Man of Crime's boundary with Italy. Instead of a weary hour spent in a train or motor car among an indistinguishable crowd, you will have

enjoyed two whole days and one night in a mountainous and beautiful country, among people of genuine and individual interest. In the end you will have reached exactly the same spot as if you had gone by the brief and less agreeable route, and you will have escaped with hardly a smell of the health resorts.

Coming down in this way from the mountains, I emerged again upon the old coast road, just after it had quitted the last hotels and villas of Mentone, and I found that not even railways and electric trams can altogether obliterate the solemnity of that gradual slope along the face of the precipitous cliff where the road passes from France into Italy.

Close beside the mouth of a ravine which splits the mountain, a French sentry was posted. As I crossed the short space of neutral ground beyond him, I thought of all the beautiful things I had left behind me—the churches of Normandy; the rivers of Touraine, the fields of Languedoc, the Provençal cities, and the mountains that rise from the Mediterranean shore. I thought of all the brave history, the brilliant deeds, the passionate affection, the gentle civility, and instinctive shapeliness of mind and word that lie gathered up under the single name of France. And while the vision of that gracious country was still hanging before my mind, I was confronted by a sentry in a different uniform, a particularly grumpy official assaulted me with questions in another tongue, and I knew that the limit had really come.

But with one foot touching Italian soil in spite

of his protests, it was not the apparition of a particularly grumpy official, astride a tram line, that occupied my soul. In front of me lay the country round which the history of the moving world had been centred for two thousand years. There were the fields which gave strength to Rome. There were the noble towns, the bright mountains, the torrents spanned by ancient bridges, the gardens colonnaded with weathered marble, the silent battlefields, the palaces too full of shadows to be desolate. Old memories and dim associations, the crowding words of many poets, the visions of many artists called me onward into that immemorial land, which still holds out a promise of rebirth and life renewed. But my way led no further, and to me there only remained the most difficult task in life—the task of turning back.

PART II

BY MONTGOMERY CARMICHAEL

Ah! qual fiamma di gloria e d'amore
Scorrer sento per tutte le vene
Cara Italia, scrivendo di te!

CHAPTER I

SAN REMO

San Remo is indeed an earthly paradise, transplanted straight from some favoured corner of the Garden of Eden. It abounds in the Biblical palm, the land flows with Biblical oil and wine, its hills and valleys bring forth rich grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and fruitful trees, every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the orange, the citron, the almond, the fig-tree, yielding fruit after his kind. Good and blest beyond earthly measure is this garden which has been planted eastward upon the Ligurian shore. So good, so blissful,—*ter quaterque beatus* —that I at once began with a frank acknowledgment of ignorance, to inquire of the people who was their patron Saint Remus, from whom assuredly all these blessings flowed, upon what day of the year San Remo was *en fête* for him, and why the Church had raised him to the honour of her altars. I found to my astonishment that, locally, the Saint was entirely unknown: my confession of ignorance was uncalled-for. Clergy and laity shrugged their shoulders: Saint Syrus, Bishop (of the sixth century, I think), was their

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patron, after him their noble collegiate Church was named, and of the idea of any Remus being a Saint all seemed a trifle scornful. But I was not to be baulked. A great French writer has profoundly said that all human institutions should be judged by two things, "la base et le nom," and these are the first two things I try to determine in studying any place. The guide-books offered no explanation: San Remo was San Remo, the most desirable place on the face of the earth: why worry about the origin of the name? Then I turned to familiar authorities who never fail in such inquiry; but there was no Saint Remus in Butler; no legend of him in the *Acta Sanctorum;* most disconcerting of all, no mention of him in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina.* There was no help for it: I must get books, and study the history of San Remo.

And from such books as I could get I found that a people called the Intemelii (Liv. 40, 41, 6; Tac. Agr. 7), their capital the modern Ventimiglia, founded a city called Matuta after the goddess of Dawn (or Matutia, after a lucumo, Caius Matutius: I knew the Corso Matuzia in San Remo well enough); that the city had been sacked by the Lombards and rebuilt; sacked again by the Saracens and retaken by a Count of Provence (A.D. 980); and then called San Romolo, after the second Bishop of Genoa who died here, and was famous for the miracles worked at his tomb after death. I was cheered by the discovery of a Saint Romulus, feeling that now a Saint

Remus could not be far off. But the books continued obstinately unilluminating: their best explanation was that San Remo was a philological corruption of San Romolo, which in my humble judgment seemed philological nonsense. What was odd, too, the place was invariably called San Romolo in the fourteenth century, often in the fifteenth, and sometimes even in the sixteenth. Light of a kind came to me at length from a fascinating book.* It seems that after the expulsion of the Saracens by William Count of Provence, the inhabitants of San Romolo, which stood where now stands the old town, built a castle below on the shore on the site of modern fashionable San Remo. A name had to be found for it, and to show that castle and town were of the same family, the pagan brother Remus was, with that Catholic instinct which has sanctified so much that is pagan, duly canonised in popular form, and placed on a level with his Christian brother Saint Romulus. I like to believe this story, and it is the most interesting fact I know about San Remo. I wonder if there is anywhere else in the world another place that is called after a Saint who has not even a legendary existence.

The history of San Remo or San Romolo is not particularly interesting. Of course, like other Italian towns, it made a gallant struggle for autonomy, and such a struggle is never without interest. The idleness of the life of fashionable

* It deserves special mention. "Viaggio nella Liguria Marittima." By Davide Bertolotti. Turin: 1834. 3 vols.

San Remo, the tropical luxuriance of trees and flowers, the soft balmy atmosphere, the constant sounds of lullaby in the air, cause one to nod somewhat over dry history books, and induce a certain indifference to what may have happened up above in old San Remo in days gone by. The Bishops and then the Archbishops of Genoa were its overlords until 1296. . . . Here I should assuredly have dozed again, but that my eye caught the dear familiar name of Archbishop Jacopo da Voragine, author of the famous "Golden Legend" which Caxton translated. He it was who sold San Remo to the Dorias for 407,000 Genoese livres, and the Dorias in turn sold it to the Most Serene Republic in 1359. The Sanremesi kicked against the change; no people seem to have relished the Serene Republic as Master. Even in 1745 (Genoa being then the ally of France and Spain), when Admiral Rowley was bombarding the place, the inhabitants tried to convince him that they were no real subjects of the Republic, but only bound to her by treaties. A subtle Venetian might have betaken himself to reflection and the study of parchments: Admiral Rowley was a Britisher, and he bombarded the place somewhat thoroughly. San Remo had passed to the Dukes of Savoy in 1625, and was handed back to Genoa in 1749. In 1815, together with the Serene Republic, it was incorporated in the dominions of the Kings of Sardinia, and now enjoys an even and prosperous existence as the foremost wintering-place of United Italy.

SAN REMO

THE old town is "a mass of streets placed close above each other, and linked together with arms and arches of solid masonry, as a protection from the earthquakes which are frequent at San Remo. The walls are tall and form a labyrinth of gloomy passages and treacherous blind alleys, where the Moors of old might meet with a ferocious welcome."—*J. A. Symonds.*

Plate 26

SAN REMO

With the cession of Nice to France by Sardinia in 1859, the present good fortunes of San Remo began. The population has trebled since that day; it is now 22,000, and quite as many visitors take up their residence there during the season. There is now a bathing establishment for summer visitors, but that seems to have found but scant favour. The place is exclusively a winter resort, certainly the mildest, the most sheltered, the most beautiful on the Italian Riviera. First-class hotels abound, and fine villas and chateaux; there are quite half a score of English doctors; and no less than three British Churches. All this in the new or lower town, on the spot, I take it, which was first called San Remo. I confess that I escape very willingly to the old or upper town, the place for so many centuries known as San Romolo. It is a curious specimen of antiquity with its steep, dark, narrow, tortuous streets, presenting picturesque corners at every turn. The courtyard in this sketch is a typical example. It is worth while to go at least once into the old Jesuit Church of Santo Stefano, and see one of Pozzi's illusions at the back of the high altar—a far more remarkable illusion than his vault of Sant' Ignazio at Rome. It is really not until we are in the Sanctuary that the delusion of the perspective is dispelled, and even then the Corinthian capitals of his columns stand out like living and most cunningly chiselled marble. It is a pleasure, too, to get beyond the old town, up, up, into the freer fresher air. The hill is crowned by a noble dome,

belonging to the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Costa, by which San Remo is most easily identified far out at sea or from the distant mountains. The Sanctuary is a fine baroque Church, looking very devout as I have seen it, all draped in red damask for the *Quarant'ore*. From the piazza in front of the Church, after but an easy rambling climb through the old town, you may enjoy the finest view in all San Remo. It is enough to make one forgive the word-painter his worst excesses. And it does also inspire somewhat the thirst for freedom, the longing to fly from the Ligurian paradise, to coast that marvellous shore, to go in search of adventure over that range after range of mountains.

It has been pleasant to pause awhile on the threshold of Italy, but here we have no sure abiding-place. San Remo can enthral for a season, but never for a lifetime.

CHAPTER II

ALBENGA

THE coast of Liguria, anciently, may be said to have extended from the River Var in the modern *département* of the Alpes Maritimes on the west, to the River Magra beyond the Gulf of Spezia on the east. Nowadays, however, we must regard the Ligurian coast as beginning, if with a river then with the Roja near Ventimiglia, for the old county of Nice has passed into French hands. The railway journey along the coast is one of the most beautiful in the world. Happily most of the trains move no faster than the Brighton coach—the eighty-five miles between San Remo and Genoa take six hours—so that one has every opportunity of admiring land and sea. Then the long waits at wayside stations are another delight of this unique line, one of the few railway journeys that one is not in haste to be through with. There is something primitive in the brown wooden sheds that do duty for stations all along the line: even at so well-known a place as Alassio the station is only a wooden shed. I believe that a great express does dash along this line once or twice in the day, but the wise traveller will avoid it.

As to this fine *field* of Nature, heraldic language alone can in some measure blazon its splendours, as thus: per fess wavy, the Ligurian Sea azure semé of white-sailed barques and feluccas, an occasional column of smoke sable on a horizon or, and the Ligurian hills and valleys vert, semé of castles, villas, churches, farmsteads and monasteries—with the railway for pourfilar line. Then nearly every place one passes on this astounding coast, though often tiny enough in the matter of population, enjoys a resounding European fame. Between Ventimiglia, the frontier town, and Genoa, we pass Bordighera on its mountain in the sea; Ospedaletti, bright and snug in its secure shelter; San Remo; Taggia, where you may play golf; Porto Maurizio, on a high rounded promontory crowned by a striking modern collegiate church of no known architecture, great in ecclesiastical history as the birthplace of a modern Saint, Leonardo Casanuova; Oneglia, but two miles distant, full of memories of the Dorias; Alassio, kind nursing-mother of the sick; Albenga, the old capital of the Ingauni; Savona, the busy sister of Genoa, and Pegli where stands the renowned Villa Pallavicini. Of all these places so well known, so often recalled by the traveller and the journalist, only San Remo and Savona have a population of five figures, while Alassio does not number five thousand souls.

On our present journey we can only halt for a moment at Albenga. There is life in this city of the dead to-day; the old place is festooned with

ALBENGA, CATHEDRAL TOWER AND BAPTISTERY

"ARCHITECTURALLY speaking, the most interesting town on this part of the coast. The general view of the town shows the peculiar preponderance of square towers, for which it is remarkable. On closer inspection these are found to be no less surprising than when seen from a distance. That over the North entrance to the church has a strong resemblance to the campaniles of Lombardy, such as that of Mantua, and is thoroughly Italian in every detail. The very interesting baptistery is of octagonal form."—*Macgibbon.*

flags; orderly crowds of peasants and citizens stream along the narrow streets and pour in and out of the Cathedral of San Michele; in the distance I hear a band, and I have already seen other hot, dust-covered bandsmen taking their well-earned ease in the piazza. Come down unexpectedly on a small Italian town, and you are almost sure to find it *en fête*. To-day the Albenganesi are celebrating the Episcopal silver jubilee of Monsignore the Bishop. His name is Filippo Allegro, and his patron is Saint Philip Neri, called also il Santo Allegro. This happy combination of names in their bishop is explained to a small group in the piazza (I lending a listening ear) by a local wiseacre, and delights them and me, and when I ask if the bishop is not also a "Santo," they reply "altro che," and show more delight. People are easily pleased in old Liguria.

Albenga is a town of immense antiquity, capital of the Ingauni, a strong, brave, tough people, the willing allies of Hannibal, whom the Romans only subdued after the hardest fighting. Their first great defeat was in B.C. 230. The memory of that people is still very much alive in Albenga, and an Albenganese when on stilts, that is to say when writing history, poetry, or an inscription, prefers to call himself an "Ingauno." In the twentieth-century Church of the Sacred Heart I noticed a tablet recording some offering of the "Ingauna gioventù." Albenga has many historical memories; its records are full; local patriotism is strong; hence it has produced numerous writers.

"di storia patria." Dry as dust and drier are these laboured collections of local minutiæ; the outside world may occasionally consult them—it would take an "Ingauno" to read them. Albium Ingaunium, to give the place its old name—how the local historian revels in this mouthful—claims to have produced three emperors. Titus Aelius Proculus, a magnificent bandit and self-proclaimed emperor, was undoubtedly a native of the place. Flavius Vopiscus *de Quattuor Tyrannis* gives him a very bad character. But nothing daunted, the learned Canon Domenico Navone (author of *Dell' Ingaunia*, two tough volumes, Albenga, 1856) sets about whitewashing the local emperor; Albenga could not have produced a monster; therefore his vices are to be understood in a "mythological sense" as emblematic of strength and character. And so that this novel critical method might have the highest sanction, he consulted the learned Giuseppe Micali at Florence, who replied that without a doubt the vices of Proculus might be taken as allegorical or symbolical, signifying strength and heroic resistance. I know of no old-world bit of historical criticism quite so delightful as this solemn opinion, imperturbably pronounced by two dead and forgotten nineteenth-century worthies! *

* These facts are recounted in "Ingaunia" (Rome, 1884) by B. E. Maineri, a modern Albenganese with a light touch and an English sense of humour. I shall be blamed in some quarters for speaking of Micali as forgotten. We have a street called after him in Leghorn, and there is a statue of him in the local "Liceo."

Albenga was an independent Republic until 1251, when it was annexed by Genoa. It is also famous as one of the most ancient of bishoprics. One historian claims Saint Barnabas as its first bishop; others, more modest, are content to call him their first evangelist. The Bishops of Albenga have given two Popes to the Church, Innocent IV. (*ob.* 1254) and Clement VII. (*ob.* 1534). Patron Saint of the city is Michael the archangel, as is recalled by the neat motto on an old communal seal: "Tuta sit in cœlis Albigana vi Michaelis." There are two sights in Albenga that interest people most of all—many visitors come from Alassio, distant but five miles—a fine Roman bridge of ten arches of the fifth century (the Ponte Lungo), and an octagonal baptistery likewise of the fifth century, and the oldest in Christendom, if we may trust the local historians.* The best sight of all is Albenga itself from any of the surrounding hills, or even from the railway. Many of its old towers are still proudly standing, the tower of the Communal palace for instance, and noblest of all, a beautiful square brick tower with white marble embattlements, the Torre dei Marchesi del Carretto di Balestrino.

Modern Albenga would fain be up-to-date; the town is lighted by electric light, and on its mouldering walls, scrawled in red chalk, I more than once saw the latter-day legend: "Viva Combes!"

* The accompanying sketch shows this Baptistery and the Tower of San Michele, the Duomo.

CHAPTER III

THE GENOA LIGHTHOUSE

GENOA, in spite of its absorption in trade and commerce, is still a very superb city. And from no point is the fact so magnificently demonstrated as from the tip-top of the tall, slender, graceful lighthouse which shoots up from its rocky promontory far into the blue Ligurian sky. I know no lighthouse which so completely attains its end of serving as a guide by night and a landmark by day. Its keepers admitted to me—a trifle sorrowfully—that the lighthouse of New York was the higher of the two, but were somewhat consoled when I pointed out that this was built with the aid of modern appliances, while the Genoa tower connotes the mightier brain, for it has stood as it now stands since the mid-cinquecento.

It is curious and somewhat unintelligible, but very little seems to be known about the history of this conspicuous monument. I have talked about it in the Archivio di Stato at Genoa, in the Biblioteca Civica, in the Archivio of the Commune, for in Italy one learns more by talking with the living local antiquary than by burning midnight oil over his estimable tomes. But the

subject of the *Torre della Lanterna*, though it called forth enthusiasm in plenty, did not produce that wealth of detail which I had expected. Even the principal books on Genoa dismiss the *Lanterna* with two pages, a page, half a page. It is certain that a lighthouse has stood on this spot from the thirteenth century, and assuredly Genoa had its lighthouse from a much earlier date. An inscription in the interior, half-way up the present tower, states that it was destroyed by bombardment in 1512, and was restored in 1543. It is not clear whether the destruction in 1512 was complete, whether the present building is merely the old lighthouse considerably repaired, or a completely new building erected in 1543. The proud but naturally partial keepers will have it that the lower half is of the *trecento* and the upper half of the *cinquecento*, but I do not find that the subject has ever been properly threshed out by more expert antiquaries. (And so we may well leave it alone.) In whatever century erected, it is a remarkable performance, a thing of extraordinary beauty. There are two traditions connected with the architect which bear witness to the splendour of the building: one that he threw himself from the top so that he might never be called upon to build a similar *Lanterna* for any other nation; the other that he was so thrown and for the same reason; and while both traditions are assuredly myths, the latter has the more peculiarly Genoese ring about it.

The tower is 250 feet in height, and its lantern

GENOA, LIGHTHOUSE

VERY little seems to be known of the history of the "tall, slender, graceful lighthouse which shoots up from its rocky promontory far into the Ligurian sky."

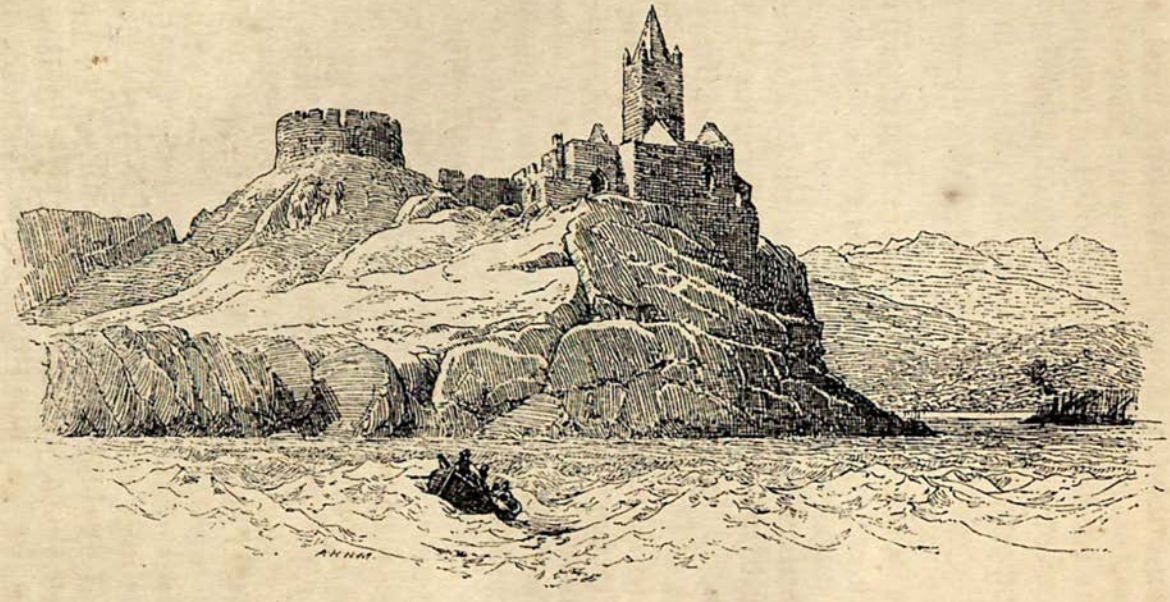
Plate 28

390 feet above the level of the Ligurian sea. Ninety-one external steps take us up the rock to the lighthouse door, and then 335 seemingly interminable steps lead from the door to the great light itself. This light is easily visible forty miles out to sea, seeming level with the water's edge at that distance. The light shows to sea for ten seconds every minute; that is the skipper's surest sign that he is making for Genoa, for he knows that the Savona light shows every half-minute, and the Spezia light every twenty-five seconds. The ascent of the lighthouse is easy and straightforward, for the staircase is not spiral. No permit is necessary for a visit: *le sue buone grazie* (which, being interpreted from its native elegance into plain Saxon, means a tip) are sufficient passport. If I should be the cause of any traveller thus climbing into the Genoese empyrean he will bless me for ever. He probably knows what *la Superba* looks like from the sea, for if he is a wise traveller he will have come from Southampton on a North German Lloyd boat (a delightful trip); up here he will see Genoa from the sea and from a height. No city bears looking down upon so well, always excepting Florence. The tawdriness of modern Genoa is softened by the distance; far out at sea ships heading for the harbour, ships which have left the harbour an hour before; in the busy port below, every corner of which is visible to us here, we acclaim the vastness of Genoese commerce; and in the villas which stud the fine amphitheatre of hills we realise the greatness of

Genoese wealth; while palaces, and towers, and spires, and the noble cupola of Santa Maria in Carignano take dreamland shapes as seen from this great altitude. All Genoa lies before us in a superb panorama, and it must surely have been from a similar coign of vantage that some dreamer first named her *La Superba.*

Many other places come within our purview; on a clear day Corsica, that thorn in the side of the old Republic, and on all days the promontory of Portofino, which is shown in this sketch. I would say, without any fear of contradiction, that Portofino is the most beautiful spot on either Riviera, east or west, on the whole of the Ligurian coast that is. And I would say—but here I am sure of contradiction—that the Englishman has a keener eye than anybody else for the recondite beauties of Italy. My convincing proof is that he has annexed Portofino. Since Mr. Montagu Yeats Brown, not many years ago, bought the old Castello of Portofino and made a habitation of what hitherto only had a name, many wise Englishmen have followed in his wake, so that, on a holiday, the Union Jack may be seen flying from numerous flagstaffs, and the whole tip of the promontory is in English hands, an imperium in imperio. This part of the Riviera di Levante is developing rapidly. At Santa Margherita, (the station for Portofino), at Rapallo and in the bay of Rapallo, villas, palaces, hotels, kursaals are rising rapidly, while the old fishing villages are left in all their simple pristine picturesqueness.

It is an enchanted and enchanting land, so full of beauty, so replete with charm, that we almost resign ourselves to the want of that greatest charm and beauty of Italy, the sound of the Tuscan tongue, which here prevails not. The inquisitive traveller will descend here for a space, dip in the deep blue waters, sail on the deep blue sea, climb on the purple mountains, dream on the emerald lea; but let the dream be brief, let him depart right speedily, if he would not join the band of lotos eaters who, having entered this enchanted paradise, are there enthralled for ever, beyond all hope of recovery to their native land.



CHAPTER IV

PORTO VENERE AND THE GULF OF SPEZIA

THE railroad brings us coasting the ever varying Ligurian shore from Ventimiglia straight to Spezia. The plague of tunnels begins in good earnest at Genoa; we pass through eighty and more in the sixty miles which separate Genoa from Spezia, and no thought of the marvellous feat of engineering which has made the journey possible, consoles us for the loss of those pleasures of sight which are every moment being cut in two by the devouring darkness. We descend at the Hotel Croce di Malta at Spezia in worse plight than if we had thrice made the tour of the circle railway at home on an afternoon in mid-August.

But joy cometh with the early morning. Throwing back the sun shutters, from the second floor of the lofty hotel building we gaze out upon one of the most beautiful gulfs, one of the most wonderful natural harbours in all the world, many of the finest warships of modern Italy lying securely at anchor in the near offing. The sunlight, here and there, at regular intervals, strikes upon a dozen or so metallic points high up on the

western hills of the bay; they are the breech ends of the powerful guns which make it impossible that any enemy should enter the gulf and live. A little steamer, its lower and upper deck one black mass of humanity, is briskly puffing over from Lerici, bringing workmen to the busy arsenal of Spezia, Napoleon's dream, realised in modern Italy's chief industrial triumph.

We dress in haste, having learnt over-night that there is an early boat to Porto Venere at the western point of the gulf. These little steamers are run on delightfully informal principles; there is no gangway, for instance, and all on board, old women with baskets of eggs and bundles of washing, peasants with their implements and workmen with their tools, fishermen with baskets of fish, military with sacks of provisions for this or that half-hidden fort, all leap ashore from the bulwarks as the little craft is being moored. At the same time a number of brown bare-footed urchins have leapt on board to take a long flying leap ashore again just after the steamer has been unmoored from the wooden pier. No harsh voice in authority is ever raised against these entertaining gymnastics. Let no British respect for the man at the wheel check your bubbling desire for information; if you do not talk to him he will soon enough talk to you, and a very entertaining companion I found him. At the promontory of San Girolamo, before coming to Fezzano, he grew low-spirited; here until recently, not far from the shore, a wonderful spring of fresh water

rose gurgling into the salt water of the gulf. It was about twenty-five feet in circumference, and came from a depth of about fifty feet. No small boat could remain within the periphery of its whirlpool without being anchored. The spring has now been built over and stopped up by the quay which juts out from the new coal storage area. This was what depressed the man at the wheel. He was of opinion that a wise authority should have raised a great tube round the providential spring, and so all the warships and the merchant ships could have comfortably taken in fresh water while lying in the deep waters of the gulf. A French engineer seems to have suggested something of the kind in 1808, but his scheme was difficult and costly. Other authorities say, with undoubted truth, that the water was brackish and muddy; but my dogmatic friend assured me that it was "acqua dolcissima," and the old boatmen tell the same story. The freshwater spring, a mere memory now, was known as *La Polla*.

Steaming to Porto Venere we touch Fezzano on the way, not much beyond *La Polla*, and then Santa Maria delle Grazie, a charming little fishing village with a bay of its own. On its southern promontory stands Varignano, famous in old days as a quarantine station, famous now as having twice held Garibaldi when Victor Emmanuel's prisoner, once after Aspromonte in 1862, and again after Mentana in 1867. From Le Grazie the boat goes to the triangular island of Palmaria at the very mouth of the gulf. Here there is a busy

semaphor and Marconi apparatus; soldiers are being industriously drilled upon the shore; and —said my friend at the wheel—there are eighty-four cannon distributed about the batteries of the island. (An exaggeration, surely; there are not more than 280 guns defending Spezia both by sea and land.* Still the defences of the Isola Palmaria must be very formidable.)

It is from Palmaria that one gets the finest view of Porto Venere. At the extreme point of the rocky promontory stands the ruined Gothic Church of San Pietro; tall, narrow, weatherbeaten houses of many colours, squeezed tight together, face the sea right down upon the water's edge; the tower of the parish church, San Lorenzo, stands out finely; high above all are the massive remains of a Genoese fort that has fired upon the ships of most nations. It would be impossible to imagine a place more picturesque, more entirely in accord with traditional artistic fancy. It is but a matter of a few minutes from the island to the mainland, and so greatly has the man at the wheel inflamed our imagination with the wonders of this place, past and present, that, following the barefoot fisherfolk and market women, we eagerly leap ashore, even before the vessel is moored. Not that there is after all overmuch to see in this crumbling hamlet of less than a thousand souls. But a visit to Porto Venere is unique because of its position, its views, its air, its complete originality, its astounding his-

* "Guida della Città e del Golfo della Spezia" (1903), p. 125.

tory. Over the entrance gate stands, cut in marble, the inscription; "Colonia Januensium, anno 1113." The Serene Republic had no more loyal colony. The people to-day speak unmixed Genoese, whereas in the republic's possessions on the other side of the gulf, though the dialect is uncouth, it is not without a certain admixture of Tuscan. Entering by the little gateway, too small to admit of a carriage, and following a long narrow street we soon come to the black-and-white marble ruins of Saint Peter's (black marble of Porto Venere and white marble of Luni). The church was consecrated in 1118 by Pope Gelasius II., who in the same year consecrated the Duomo of Pisa. For a fighting station like Porto Venere it was overmuch exposed. The Arragonese came against the place in 1494 with thirty-five galleys and fourteen other ships. They effected a landing, only to find the rocks thickly covered with tallow (the device of one Bardella, who lives in history), so that hundreds of armoured men slipped down into the sea and were drowned or shot in the water. After seven hours hard fighting the Arragonese were beaten back, but the Church of St. Peter's and also the Church of Saint Laurence had been sadly damaged by their cannon. The Portoveneresi appealed to the Serene Republic for help to rebuild their churches, but this seems to have been meted out to them in so niggardly a fashion by the Doge and the "Magnificum Consilium Dominorum Antianorum," that they could only rebuild San Lorenzo, and San Pietro remains in ruins to this day. It is now a

"monumento nazionale," and well cared for. Agostino Falconi stoutly denies that there was ever a temple of Venus on this spot; the "Forum Veneris," he says, was on the Island of Palmaria, and was destroyed by Mago, the brother of Hannibal, in B.C. 205.* But this is not the opinion of earlier writers, who maintain not only that San Pietro is built on the site, but also in part of the ruins of the Temple of Venus.†

Just by the ruined church is the famous Grotta Arpaia, now called Grotta Byron. The public (alas!) is no longer admitted to it on account of the supposed danger of some rocks overhead falling. They certainly look dangerous and threatening enough. By following the wall along the cliff to a small projecting terrace it is possible to get a fairly good view of the grotto and to form some idea of the marvellous play of the waters within its myriad recesses. The best plan of all is to take a boat round from the pier, and the view of Porto Venere from the sea makes it well worth the trouble. Over the door which gave access to the grotto is an inscription in English and Italian, the English version of which will be found on the opposite page.

I have done what I could to unravel the mystery of this inscription. Assuredly this most Byronic grotto—as I admit it is—never inspired Byron to write the "Corsair." In the first place there is not

* "Rime . . . seguite di numerose dettagliate Annotazioni sul Golfo di Spezia," p. 281. Lucca, 1846.

† Bertolotti, *op. cit.* iii. 147.

the echo even of a grotto in that poem, and in the second place it was written in 1814; before Byron

THIS GROTTO
WHICH INSPIRED LORD BYRON
IN THE SUBLIME POEM OF THE CORSAIR
RECORDS THE IMMORTAL POET
WHO
AS A DARING SWIMMER
FROM PORTO VENERE TO LERICI
DEFIED THE WAVES OF THE LIGURIAN SEA.

had ever thought of coming to Italy. I have been unable to trace that he ever visited Porto Venere, much less swam the gulf thence to Lerici. He certainly was at Lerici in October 1822. Trelawny tells us that he had a swim there,* but not a swim to Porto Venere, only a swim some three miles out to Byron's schooner the *Bolivar*. It is clear to me, too, that the ever-inaccurate Trelawny errs here, and that the swim he refers to took place in the summer at Viareggio, and not in the autumn at Lerici. Writing to Murray from Genoa on October 9, Byron says: "I have been very unwell—four days confined to my bed in 'the worst inn's worst room' at Lerici, with a violent rheumatic and bilious attack, &c."† And writing to Douglas Kinnaird on December 19 he says: "Ever since the summer when I was fool enough to swim some

* "Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author." London: 1878. Vol. ii. p. 50. And then see vol. i. pp. 70–71.

† "Letters and Journals," 1901, vol. vi. p. 121.

four miles under a broiling sun, at Via Reggio, I have been more or less ailing."* And see his references to this subject in a letter to Richard Belgrave Hoppner, dated February 27, 1823.†

The memorial tablet was erected in 1877 by Count Ferdinando Pieri-Nerli, member of a very well-known noble house of Siena. In the same year a broadsheet in English and Italian commemorative of the event written by a certain Signor Gabriello Montefinale, was published in English and Italian.‡ The following is the English version: "A memorial to Lord Byron. For a long time complaints have been made by travellers who come in numbers to visit Porto Venere—a point at the western extremity of the Gulf of Spezia, where still may be seen remains of a temple of Venus, afterwards St. Peter's—that the gate had been walled out by which one descends into the famous grotto Arpaia. This grotto has been the subject of much study of antiquaries, painters, poets, and especially geologists, down to the time of our own contemporary Commendatore John Capellini. Now, at last, thanks to the praiseworthy and generous act of Count Ferdinando Pieri-Nerli, proprietor of the handsome villa at the Island Palmaria, we are happy to see opened for the public convenience a magnificent iron gateway.§ Above it has been

* "Letters and Journals," 1901, vol. vi. p. 150.

† *Ibid.* p. 169.

‡ "Ricordo a Lord Byron in Porto Venere." Printed at Genoa by Sambolino, Vico Vegetti, No. 1.

§ Read, "an unpretentious iron gate."

placed an inscription in Italian and in English that records an historic fact of interest to the traveller, concerning Lord Byron whose genius and fame are so widely known. His was a happy thought, and, in expressing our gratitude we cannot help adding a hope that something may be done to render less difficult the passage of the narrow path through the rock since all travellers are not Alpinists."

I know nothing of the "retroscena" of this ceremony, but it is worth noting that the excellent local guide of the gulf which I have already referred to, says of the inscription that it is false especially with regard to the "Corsair" (p. 163). If Byron was never at Porto Venere at all it is time that the myth was scotched, and that the ancient and natural name of a famous grotto should be restored to it. I wonder how the fable first originated?

The parish church of San Lorenzo, consecrated in 1130 by Innocent II. (often since repaired and restored), is beautiful in its pillars of the local stone, and can boast of two finely wrought altars of the *cinquecento*. There is a curious log or beam fastened to the wall on the left of the organ as you enter, and thereby hangs a tale of first importance in the ecclesiastical history of Porto Venere. Some fishermen in the thirteenth century found this beam or log out at sea, and took it in tow, intending to cut it up for firewood. But the first blow of the axe revealed it to be full of priceless relics, set in gold and silver and precious stones. That is the

written story, but the popular voice, which never embroiders without dramatic improvement, has it that the log, when taken in tow, would not move, until the parish priest, from the point where stands St. Peter's, had solemnly blessed it far out at sea.

To the south of the island of Palmaria lies the far lesser island of Tino, and to the south of that again the islet of Tinotto, little more than a large rock. Without doubt these three islands were once conjoined to the mainland at Porto Venere, forming one long narrow rocky promontory. Tino has no mean place in hagiography. In the sixth century it had but one inhabitant—there are but two now, the keepers of the lighthouse—Venerius, priest and hermit, a native of Porto Venere, or perhaps of Palmaria, who lived there a life of great austerity and sanctity. He dwelt alone concealed and unknown for years, until discovered by one Agrestius, who spread abroad the fame of his sanctity, so that hundreds had recourse to him on his little island to be healed both in body and soul. There can be no doubt, I think, that there was such a saint and hermit. He is mentioned in the Roman martyrology; his legend finds a place in the *Acta Sanctorum* on September 13; there were early churches raised in his honour; a flourishing monastery existed on his islet for centuries, until its monks were driven to settle on the mainland near Le Grazie by the plague of the Saracens. These monks were afterwards put under the Olivetan reform by Pope Eugenius IV., and that, I suppose, is why Saint Venerius is represented in

PORTO VENERE

"We embarked in a filuca for Legorne, but the sea running very high we put in at Porto Venere, which we made with peril, between two narrow horrid rocks, against which the sea dashed with great velocity; but we were soone delivered into as great a calme, and a most ample harbour, being the Golpho di Spetia."—*Evelyn.*

Plate 29

PORTO VENERE

art in a white cowl. But his existence has given rise to the following problem: May not the building which stood where now stands San Pietro have been an old church of Saint Venerius, and not a *Templum Veneris?* The clash of opinions has so far reached no conclusion. One thing seems certain that the place, Porto Venere, took its name from the whole gulf, the Portus Veneris, which afterward changed its name to Portus Lunae, or Gulf of Luni. It has only been known as the Gulf of Spezia during the last five or six hundred years.

The tour of the whole gulf may be comfortably made in one day. The steamer takes us over from Porto Venere to Lerici on the other side of the gulf. Here again the learned fall to: was there a temple to Venus at one end of the gulf, and to Venus Ericina* at the other end? Or does Lerici owe its name to the neighbouring *Mons Ilicis*, where the ilex once abounded? But let not the reader fear that I shall lead him into this maze. Lerici was a possession of the Republic of Pisa up to the thirteenth century (1256), when it was taken by the Genoese. It is chiefly interesting to Englishmen as the place where Francis, fifth Duke of Somerset, was murdered. He was on his travels at the time, and having gone into the Augustinian Church with some French friends, seems to have behaved rudely there to some ladies of the house of Botti. He was shot from a window with an

* Eryx, Ericis, the mountain in Sicily where stood the famous temple of Aphrodite.

arquebus on April 20, 1678, by Antonio Botti, husband of one of the ladies. The event, as may be imagined, agitated the Serene Republic considerably. Charles II. insisted upon condign punishment. Botti and his brother were condemned to perpetual exile; the window from which the shot was fired was walled up, and an inscription derogatory to the Botti placed there. In 1688, it is supposed on the intercession of James II., they were pardoned and allowed to return; the window was unwalled and the inscription removed. But it is a long story which cannot here be told.

About a mile nearer Spezia, delightfully situated, is the village of San Terenzo, interesting, too, to Englishmen, as containing the Casa Magni, Shelley's last residence. The Shelleys and Williams came here on May 1, 1822, and it was on July 1 of that year that Shelley and his friend sailed for Leghorn to meet Leigh Hunt at Pisa. The Casa Magni was bought by the Marchesi Maccarani, of Sarzana, in 1836, and is still in their possession. The house, in the spring, bears the legend: *affittasi* (to let); and can be taken for the bathing season just as in Shelley's day. It has often been occupied by English people. The house itself is but little changed since 1822, but it was then close down upon the water, with only a winding rugged footpath to Lerici; now a good carriage road runs between it and the shore, which is graced by one or two pretty bathing establishments. Mrs. Shelley gives a gloomy account of the place and the people, exaggerated

probably even for her time. Now, however, except for the absence of the pure Tuscan tongue, it is hardly possible to imagine more delightful rest and recreation than a summer holiday spent on the ever beautiful shores of the noble Gulf of Spezia.

CHAPTER V

MASSA-CARRARA

THE mountains represented in this drawing are a range of the Apuan Alps, a sight very familiar to visitors to Viareggio, taken indeed from the Pineta of Viareggio, and taken, be it said, by one who must have used much patience and observation to seize upon these mountains, as he has done, in just those conditions of the atmosphere which show them at their best. The highest point is the *Monte Altissimo* of Seravezza, the point below it to the left the *Tambura* of Massa, the two more distant peaks are of the Carrara range—marble mountains, all of them. Each of these marble centres has its city: Carrara, Massa, and for Seravezza, Pietrasanta: and each of these three cities, none of them by the sea, has its close-lying *Marina* or place of shipment, Marina di Carrara, Marina di Massa, and for Pietrasanta, Forte dei Marmi. Here are the piers from which the marble is loaded for Leghorn and Genoa, and most of the marble that you see at Woking or Kensal Green has at some time or other lain upon the beach here waiting fair weather for the first stage of its journey to London. I have mentioned ducal Massa and princely Carrara, and

though we have no drawing of these elect cities to show, the mere mention leads me naturally to speak more of themselves and their history than of the mountains out of which they are partly built. And as my subject is big and my chapter little, and as the theme has been suggested to me by mountains, I think it prudent to anticipate the wag who could not help quoting: *Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.* For my own part I recall with all solemnity the Psalmist: *Levavi oculos meos ad montes unde veniet auxilium mihi.*

Coming then from Spezia, on our further journey toward Florence, we pass through the episcopal city of Sarzana, where the expresses stop, and the once far more famous episcopal city of Luni,* where the *omnibus* train barely halts, for no one alights or departs, and in an hour we are at Avenza. Here we should by rights change for Carrara, and take the branch line train, which in twenty minutes and less—there is no intervening station—would set us down in the city famed for its marbles. But Massa is the next station to Avenza—only eight minutes distant—and as Massa takes precedence in history—and even to-day, administratively—of Carrara, I will ask the traveller to come on there with me first, for we can drive back to Carrara through charming country at trifling cost, and without the trouble of a change and wait—if that is ever to be deplored—at a country junction.

* The diocese is still called of Sarzana-Luni, so that that great episcopal name is yet alive in ecclesiastical history. Of the old city but a few ruins are left.

Massa gave Carrara its lustre in *history* (I am not thinking of commercial glory), and as my traveller is nothing if not historical, it would be impossible for him to understand Carrara without a first visit to, and some study of, the old capital. The station is about a mile from the town. Two hotel 'buses * are in waiting—a rather unwelcome sign of progress in these old-world by-ways. But neither hostelry is unduly progressive. I frequent the less progressive of the inns because it fronts on the fine Piazza degli Aranci, three sides of it planted with an avenue of orange-trees, and from my window I can look out upon the superb ducal palace, a great red building with stucco ornamentations which would dignify the noblest capital in Europe, and which leaves no doubt whatever about this little place having once been a capital city. A great number of inscriptions, in churches, on palaces, over the town gates, tell of its rulers, and immediately fill my traveller with a devouring curiosity to know something of the princely family. That curiosity, which I find most legitimate, I cannot satisfy within the limits of a chapter ; but I at least append such a list of the sovereign marquises, princes, and dukes of this State as may light up a little to the intelligent traveller all the buildings and monuments of Massa and Carrara.

The Duchy of Massa, with the Principality of Carrara, remained a separate state down to the year

* Hotel Massa and Hotel Giappone.

1829, and continued a Duchy and a Principality for another thirty years. The ancient and illustrious house of Cybo ruled here, wisely and well, for about three hundred years. They were not natives of the Lunigiana, but Ligurians, Genoese, one of the greatest of the Genoese families, one of the twenty-eight families who in 1528 were declared to constitute the whole of the Genoese nobility. The Cybos have produced a Viceroy of Naples, many Cardinals, and one Pope, Innocent VIII. But our concern here is only with the family after they had become sovereigns of Massa-Carrara. Lorenzo Cybo, son of Franceschetto Cybo, Count of Ferentillo, married in 1520 the last of the Malaspinas, Ricciarda, heiress of the Marquisate of Massa and the Lordship of Carrara. Lorenzo's mother was Maddelena de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and sister to Pope Leo X. These names just to show how influential the family were. The Cybos and their descendants continued to reign in these small but important fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire until seventy-five years ago. Massa was raised under their rule first to a Principality, then to a Duchy; Carrara first to a Marquisate, then to a Principality. They produced some great rulers, notably Alberic the Great, son of Lorenzo and Ricciarda, who became the first Prince of Massa and the first Marquis of Carrara. He was the *Pater Patriæ*, greatest name in an illustricus roll. Massa, when he came to the throne, consisted of little more than the *Fortezza* and the houses round it —*Massa Vecchia*, as it is called to-day. Alberico

built the city which we see, and which is known as *Massa Nuova*, or still more fitly as *Massa Cybea*. Within the walls which he built were included some scattered houses, churches, and convents, but practically he built a new city. I like the name, too, which Massa earned for itself about this time, *Massa Picta*, or in Italian, *Massa la Dipinta*, from the wealth of external frescoes which adorned its houses; alas! of all this painted splendour but a few faint traces remain in the Piazza degli Aranci on the Palazzo Diana. Alberico was a man of magnificent mind, and ruled his small state like the ruler of a great state. Magnificence, indeed, was the distinguishing note of the Cybo character. He obtained the privilege of a *Zecca*, or Mint, in 1559, and you may see ten plates of his beautiful coins —now become exceedingly rare—at the end of Viani's book about the family.* In 1590 he was granted the privilege of using the Imperial Eagle, with the word LIBERTAS on a scroll, as a chief of honourable augmentation, and further the right to the style *Illustrissimo*. Only think of the dignity of those days, when a great Prince would not suffer himself to be called Most Illustrious without the sanction of the Supreme Fount of Honour: nowadays we are all *Illustrissimi*, and most of us are *Cavalieri* to boot! The reign of Alberic the Great, his feats of arms, his astute diplomacy, his royal magnificence, his patronage of belles lettres and

* "Memorie della Famiglia Cybo e delle Monete di Massa di Lunigiana." By Giorgio Viani. Pisa, 1808. A standard book on the subject, and a consummately skilful bit of work of the kind.

the arts, make fascinating reading. He was himself a man of letters and has left—still in MS.—the story of his family (*Ricordi della Famiglia Cybo*). He died at Massa on January 18, 1623, at the great age of ninety-one, having seen the reigns of fourteen Popes, six Emperors, six Kings of France, and three Kings of Spain.

There is a parallel between the house of Cybo and the house of Stuart; in each case the last male scion was a Cardinal Prince of Holy Church. Cardinal Cammillo Cybo, the Prince in question, died at Rome on January 12, 1743, and is buried in the Carthusian Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. I cannot refrain from quoting the inscription on his tomb, a curious last word from a house of such magnificence:

D.O.M.
HAEC REQUIES MEA
HIC HABITABO
QUONIAM ELEGI EAM
IMMUNDUS VERMIS
CAMILLUS
CYBO
UT UBI ERAT THESAURUS
IBI ESSET COR MEUM.

Viani notes it as a curious fact that three of the great reigning families of Italy became extinct in the male line about the same time: the Farnese, Dukes of Parma, with Antonio in 1731; the Medici, Grand Dukes of Tuscany, with Gian Gas-

tone in 1737; and the Cybo, Dukes of Massa and Princes of Carrara with Cardinal Cammillo in 1743. The fact is not only curious but fraught with matters of the highest moment, for it brought the Bourbons into Parma, the Hapsburg-Lorraines into Tuscany, and the Estes and Austria-Estes into Massa-Carrara.

The law of succession in Massa-Carrara was semi-salic, and women henceforth ruled the state. Alderano, the last prince, was succeeded by his daughter Maria Theresa, a very wise sovereign. She married in 1741, Hercules III., Duke of Modena, the last of the Estes (*ob.* 1803), and by the force of this marriage Modena and Massa eventually became united. Maria Theresa died in 1790 leaving but one daughter, Maria Beatrice, the last sovereign of Massa-Carrara, and the last scion of the ancient and illustrious Italian house of Este. She married the Archduke Ferdinand, Governor and Lieutenant-General of Lombardy, youngest son of the Emperor Francis of Lorraine and the immortal Empress Maria Theresa. Massa and Carrara were added to Elisa Baciocchi's Principality of Lucca during the French obliteration; but Maria Beatrice re-entered her states after the Congress of Vienna, no longer as a vassal of the Holy Roman Empire, it is true, for that noblest ideal of temporal sovereignty had fallen for ever in 1806, but as an independent sovereign of the new Congress pattern. It was precisely the want of the feudal nexus, of the feudal rationale, that made the small Italian states after the Restoration

anomalies, nay almost impossibilities. Maria Beatrice continued to rule in Massa-Carrara till the day of her death on November 14, 1829, when the separate existence of these ancient dominions ceased, and they were inherited by her son Francis IV., Duke of Modena. Massa remains a Duchy, Carrara a Principality, but these states passing from Cybo to Este, from Este to Hapsburg, now form an integral part of the Modenese dominions or *Stati Estensi.* Francis V. succeeded to his father in 1846, and in him we have the last Duke of Massa and Prince of Carrara. He died in exile on November 20, 1875, without issue.

These are called the dry bones of history I know, but they are a nucleus around which fact very soon begins to collect. And at least I may claim to have been brief. But it is time that we took a turn about modern Massa, though even this over-brief talk about her rulers has not left us much time to see the place.

The exterior of the great Ducal palace we have already admired: it was begun by Alberic the Great, and continued by his magnificent successors. The one thing I regret is that the entrance gates should not be in the centre. Massa, now a city of the dead, is the capital of the modern province of Massa-Carrara, a sore point to Carrara, a city which is very much alive indeed. But the Italian Government has shown a wise respect for ideas and traditions in the choice: besides the huge palace formed a very convenient building for the Prefecture, the Court of First Instance, and the

Pretura. On the second floor in the left wing of the palace is a corner from which the historical student will have difficulty in tearing himself away: the *Archivio di Stato*, or Record Office of Massa. The faint outline I have sketched of the Princes and Dukes of Massa will enable him to imagine how rich are the memorials and treasures here preserved. And the arrangement is so perfect. This is due to the Cavalier Giovanni Sforza, who, after years of patient, enthusiastic labour here, has at length accepted promotion and gone to Turin as keeper of its most important archives. This, too, is the place to study the Lunigiana, its history, its topography, its writers, for Signor Sforza has gathered together a complete library of all books relating to that territory.

Near the centre of the piazza stood the old Collegiate Church of St. Peter. This was one of the churches included in *Massa Cybea* by Alberic's walls. The church was pulled down during Elisa Baciocchi's usurpation in 1807, a bad bit of vandalism by all accounts. No trace of it remains save the old doors, which have become the doors of the palace. The object of the destruction was to "improve" the piazza, and to give a clear view of the palace. Massa has been an episcopal see only since 1823; Alberico tried hard for the dignity so did other Princes of the dynasty, notably, Maria Theresa. The coveted honour only came six years before the last sovereign of Massa-Carrara, Maria Beatrice, died. When Massa was made a Bishopric, her natural Cathedral, the Collegiate Church of

St. Peter, had been razed to the ground. But there was another fine church in the city, San Francesco of the Observantins, which was appropriated for the purpose, while the large convent adjoining it was turned into the diocesan seminary. The Duomo has been "rimodernato," hateful word, which meets us at every turn in our travels in Italy, not uttered in repentance, but exultingly, with latter-day unction. Still the proportions of the church are fine, and the building is not altogether unworthy of the state's traditions. Here, too, and not in old Saint Peter's, the Cybos had erected their mausoleum, now the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. The simple tombs are in the crypt below.

Over the entrance to the crypt is written:

INGRESSUS AD REQUIEM
REGRESSUS AD JUDICIUM,

and the place is both peaceful and solemn. With my rough genealogical notes and the light of a candle the historical student will be tempted to linger here some time. Here he will find the tombs of Lorenzo, first marquis; Alberic, third marquis and first prince; Alberic II., first duke; Carlo II., second duke; remnants of the tomb of Alberic III., third duke; and others of this illustrious family. Here, too, was buried the last of the male rulers, Alderano, fourth duke, but all signs of his resting-place have disappeared. For when the Sansculotte troops arrived in this elect city, they, or those who favoured them, rifled the tombs in the crypt, knowing that a magnificent family, with its con-

tempt of riches, is often buried with jewels and precious stones.

But now, after the fatigues of so much genealogy and history, it is time that we took an airing, and I propose that we should climb up to the old *fortezza*. We cannot get inside without an order, for the old fort is a modern prison, but we can sit down outside and enjoy one of the most beautiful panoramas on this beautiful coast. We see the promontory of the Corvo, western point of the Gulf of Spezia; this side of it lies the historical river Magra, the dividing line between Etruria and Liguria. What peoples and what languages lie before us, too. Here we speak Massese; three miles to the north of us Carrarese; across the Magra a dialect that more resembles the Genovese. Far out to the north-west I see a twinkling light sprung up with the setting of the sun: the beacon on the Tino, the islet where, as I have said, Saint Venerius gave himself up to austerity and contemplation more than a thousand years ago. The hum of insects is in the air; the scent of thyme and wormwood; the strong voices of peasants, carolling in a dialect with which we are none too familiar. Presently, from the town below, arise the first strains of a *potpourri* from *Aida*. It is Sunday and the town band plays in the Piazza degli Aranci. We descend, and, sitting upon a stone bench, watch the beauty and fashion, the bar and the bench, the bourgeois and the beggar of Massa promenade eternally, animated but orderly, under the lovely avenue of the orange trees. There

in front of us blazes the red palace of Alberic the Magnificent, and not all the gaiety of the scene can take my friend's thoughts off the dynasty of Cybo and Massa la Dipinta as their peculiar creation. Have I not done well, then, to risk the charge of pedantry and talk genealogy, though ever so briefly?

A tram now runs from Massa to Massa Marina, which promises to become a pleasant sea-bathing place. If you are here in the summer you will find it agreeable to go down there in the evening, bathe, dine, and return to the hostelry in town by the last tram. But only if you have time to spare. I would not have you, through any negligence of mine, miss a visit to the Capuchin church and convent outside and above Massa, most beautifully situated. The buildings date from 1604, were built for Capuchins, and are still inhabited by Capuchins in spite of two suppressions. Church and convent are tiny, but more characteristically Capuchin than anything I have seen in this Capuchin land. Here Alderano, hereditary Prince of Massa and Marquis of Carrara, is buried with two of his sons, Francesco and Alessandro, and once more we profit by our trifling studies in genealogy. It is in the poor and mean cells and corridors of such a convent as this, that it scarcely seems hyperbole to think that Saint Francis rose from the dead in the *cinquecento* to re-found an order, and reinfuse into it the same spirit which worked such wonders in the *duecento*. Every Capuchin convent tries to have a *bosco* in memory of Saint

THE CARRARA MOUNTAINS FROM THE SEA-COAST

"THE sand dunes stretch for miles between the sea and a low wood of stone-pines, with the Carrara hills descending from their glittering pinnacles by long lines to the headlands of the Spezzian Gulf. The immeasurable distance was all painted in sky blue and amethist, then came the golden green of the dwarf firs; then dry yellow in the grasses of the dunes; and then the many-tinted sea with surf tossed up against the furthest cliffs."—*J. A. Symonds.*

Plate 30

Francis' devotion to woods and forests as favourite places of prayer. The little *bosco* at Massa, rising up steeply behind the convent, is wild and alluring, recalling the *selve* of the Fioretti.

But one other thing of the many things to see in Massa, and we must hurry onward. Do not miss seeing the public fount known as Batti del Barilo. Batti is the dialect for Battista, and Barilo for Barile, barrel. The marble figure of a brawny demagogue with his sleeves rolled up holds a marble barrel, from which the clear water pours in a continuous stream. What a puzzle he must be to the casual visitor. The fact is that Massa was so important a place, and had so much character, that it developed a *Maschera* of its own. Batti is the *Maschera* of Massa, just as surely as Stenterello is of Florence, or Dottor Balanzon of Bologna.* He still survives as King of the Revels, and as King Carnival his effigy is still borne about the streets during the last days of that now faintly-festive season. At least, I am sure it was so in 1904.

* * * * *

Carrara is a delightful, bright, brisk, bustling city, full of modern importance, and not without ancient interest. All the world wants its marbles, so all the world is represented here. English quarry-owners are numerous, and of course among the most important. People come and go on business. There is bustle and life in the place, and we

* Or Doutour Balanzoun, as he is called in the rude dialect of a refined city.

soon come out of the dream-fit of Massa. A quarry-owner is talking unintelligible Carrarese to his foreman one minute, Tuscan with an accent to a customer from Florence the next, then English to a buyer from London, or German to a sculptor from Berlin. It is obvious enough at once that the big world has its eye upon this place; that the place is industriously in contact with the big world, humouring it, cajoling it, and with both hands receiving its streams of current gold. The quarry-owner is a rich man, has a house in the town, and a villa on the hills as far away as Massa, perhaps, entertains the cosmopolitan world right royally, and being engaged in about as historical an industry as now exists on the face of the earth, is a trader full of thrilling anecdote and curious information. Michael Angelo, the great conscientious workman that he was, came here often to choose the marble for his statues and facades; I have known modern sculptors do the same; all should occasionally come into contact here with marble in the rough; it would give new inspiration at home to their marble in relief.

In the centre of the town stands the Piazza Alberica, with an American bar and more houses of refreshment than I have ever seen together in an Italian street or square. The name, of course, comes from Alberic the Magnificent. In the middle of the piazza is a well-deserved rather than a meritorious statue of the last sovereign, Maria Beatrice, placed there upon her triumphant return after the Napoleonic usurpation. The so-called Duomo of

Sant' Andrea, never a cathedral, but once officiated as a Collegiate Church, is a beautiful building with a striking façade and a lovely rose window. Ecclesiastical life is at a faint ebb in Carrara. There are some 24,000 inhabitants in the city, and only six priests. I doubt if a similar singular phenomenon may be found anywhere else in Italy. There is not a single house of religious men, and but one of Religious women. The place is modern, restive, rebellious, to an extraordinary degree. Another place of interest in Carrara is the *Accademia delle Belle Arti*, situated to-day in the Carrarese palace of the dynasty, built by Alberic I. The Accademia was founded in 1769 by the munificent Maria Theresa, and transferred to the present building in 1815. Over a hundred budding Michael Angelos and Palladios are at work here upon clay models and plaster casts, upon designs of high altars, and Lady Chapels, and façades. It is a pleasure to go among them and chat with them, to watch the earnestness, the enthusiasm, the *slancio*, with which they work, to give the criticism which they invite, to bestow the praise which they deprecate, and to hear from their lips of Italy's great future in art.

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The best way to see the marble quarries of Carrara is to have a friend among quarry-owners. There are guides to the quarries, I believe, but kind friends have hitherto hindered me from making their acquaintance. A railway runs from the town up to a high point among the quarries (Ravaccione.

1500 feet), not a funicular or a light railway, but a real full-gauge, regular railway. "The easiest thing in the world," said Dickens, complaining that it was not already there in the forties;* the most marvellous and difficult feat of engineering in all Italy, is what it really is. The empty trucks begin to run up to the quarries at five in the morning. If your friend knows of your coming in time, he will have asked the Direction of the "Società Marmifera Privata" to put on their only passenger carriage for you. On the occasion of my first visit to Carrara there was no time for this, and I went up on the engine. The long, pitch-black tunnels, the narrow, giddy viaducts, the heat of the firebox and the whirling sparks, the angry straining and jerking of the locomotive as we climb through the higher tunnels, make of this ride an adventure that one is glad to have experienced but has no desire to repeat. And most of the way up, too, the engine is reversed, which adds to the feeling of insecurity. The stoker was so obliging as to point out to me the chief beauties of the scenery; but it is singular how the process of holding tight deadens the faculty of observation.

But one should certainly leave the train alone and walk down from the quarries to Carrara for the sake of getting a good idea of the whole industry. It is still conducted on boldly primitive principles. The fierce, passionate, hot-headed workers are

* "Pictures from Italy." Pictures from a new discovered country, they should have been called, for there is but the faintest image of Italy in them.

Anarchists, Socialists, Republicans, Progressists, but when it comes to their own industry they are sturdy, obstinate, old-fashioned Conservatives. Sawing by electric wire has certainly been introduced into the quarries, but on no great scale as yet. I don't think there is such a thing as a derrick on all the mountains taken together. Four or five blocks slung together are slowly and painfully lowered by ropes along the steep slopes of the *débris* to the loading places. Nor do I remember to have seen a steam crane anywhere. The enormous blocks are moved on to the flat railway trucks entirely by means of skids and crowbars. It is an exciting business to watch. The men work with a real but wild enthusiasm, to the sound of much shouting, and the rhythm of a curious sing-song of ho-hoy! ho-hoy! ho-ho-hoy! to which at regular intervals one adds a trill and another sings seconds. They pound away like furies with their crowbars, and the block moves not an inch. In front of it, skipping backwards and forwards like a chimpanzee, is a man soaping the skids. A yell! The block has moved six inches across a skid, and the chorus begins again, coaxingly at first, ho-hoy! ho-hoy! ho-ho-hoy! I have never seen such skilful, intrepid, enthusiastic workers. The fire of their enthusiasm is infectious; we long to seize a crowbar and lend a hand, and in any case cannot keep from joining in the chorus of ho-hoy! It is a slow business this of getting the marble on to the trucks, and therefore all the more exciting. And all the while we hear the roar of blasting, sometimes faintly like a

salute from a battleship in the Gulf of Spezia, and sometimes with all the din of an echoing thunder-clap overhead. Then up above us on the masses of the *débris*, the *lizzatori* are shouting their own peculiar cries and cat-calls. The air seems full of the strenuous electric energy which these fierce enthusiasts throw into their arduous, perilous labour. Presently a great yell from the *Caricatori:* we, too, shout in applause; the psychological moment has come; the great block has at length got sufficient propulsion, and glides on to the truck with an insidious sweep, while the chimpanzee skips to the ground just in time to save his life. There is nothing placid anywhere about the industry save in the sawing of the blocks. Two men with a narrow iron blade, one at each end of the wooden frame, pound away placidly and patiently, and take weeks and even months to get through a big block. The men work in summer from half-past four in the morning till one, when they cease on account of the great heat; in winter the working hours are eight to four. Wages are good, because there is much skill in the labour, and each one of these dare-devils goes out to his morning's work holding his life in his hands. They drink: the only Italians I have ever come across who drink. They are only paid every fifteen days; are exemplary during the interval; but then it is good-bye till Tuesday or even Wednesday.

In 1900 there were some six hundred and eleven quarries at work in the whole marble district, including Massa, Arni, Seravezza, &c. Of these three

hundred and forty-five were at Carrara. There are nearly 8000 men engaged in the industry.* It is extremely interesting to note that the Italian Government has confirmed without change or addition the old legislation regarding the marble quarries, and that shows how extremely far-seeing this legislation must have been. There are famous laws of Maria Theresa's of 1751 and 1771, and nothing later than 1852. But we will talk about these laws another day, for it is time that we began to descend to Carrara.

The railway is still only partially approved of. The ancient mode of transport by oxen continues in high favour. On the road down in the early morning you will meet team after team, six, eight, ten, and even twelve pair, climbing laboriously up the hill. Dickens sneers at the "clumsy carts of five hundred years ago." There is nothing the matter with the carts; they are solid, not clumsy; and exist after five hundred years because nobody has been able to improve upon them. Dickens sneers at the road, too; it is rough, certainly, but what of that? It presents no difficulties to the great sure-footed oxen, and with the tons upon tons of marble that pass over it daily it could not be kept like a macadamised carriage road. In the afternoon and evening the teams begin to come down laden. Modern mechanical genius has not

* I take these figures and some of my facts from an interesting report on the marble industry by my friend and colleague, Mr. James Allwood Smith, United States Consul at Leghorn. The report was published by his Government in 1901.

yet invented a handy or sufficient brake for the carts, and recourse is still had to ancient ingenuity: a block of marble is tied on to the cart behind to act as a drag. Of course this does not improve the road, and the drag needs the skilful handling of two or three men to direct its course. The sight of twenty-four of these dun-coloured oxen coming up the hill, with a driver sitting backwards on the yoke of each pair (twelve men in all), is fine indeed, and the constant succession of the teams suggests a triumphal procession.

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Before leaving Carrara it is worth driving down to the Marina to see the loading of the marble. There are two piers here; one the exclusive property of an Englishman, Mr. Thomas Pate, of Leghorn; a third is in course of construction. The marble is hoisted by cranes into small decked *navicelle*, which sail for Leghorn and deliver alongside the steamers. When the sea is rough no loading can be done at the piers: the empty *navicelle* take refuge in the River Magra; the partly loaded fly before the wind for shelter in the Gulf of Spezia. On such days the pier-men are set to work at driving in new piles to protect the pier during loading. That, too, is very fascinating work to watch, and done entirely to song—more melodious song than the wild notes of the workers up at the quarries. Ten or twelve men, pulling at ropes, hoist a great iron weight, which comes down with immense force on an iron-bound block that

protects the top of the pile, which is thus slowly driven into the sandy bottom of the sea. At every hoist comes a "spoken" from the foreman, and then the chorus of the men. The "spoken" seems to be new each time, and points to extraordinary fertility of imagination. *Issalo bene!* (chorus); *O Maria!* (chorus); *Su da bravi!* (chorus); and so forth. When the men get a bit slack the "spoken" takes the form of *Vengono i Tesdechi!* (the Austrians are upon us); and though no Austrian has been near Carrara for forty-five years, it is wonderful to see with what a swing that hated name sends the great weight flying into the air.

* * * * *

But something too much of this disjointed chit-chat. Besides, we must hurry back to Avenza to catch the *direttissimo* south. There are two engines on the train, which is unusually long. Many heads are out of the windows, chatting, laughing, singing, hallooing—all of them English, evidently excursionists. A good-natured-looking being, flourishing a briar pipe, catches sight of the notice: "Diramazione per Carrara," and shouts to a neighbouring head: "What ho! Carrara boom-de-ay!" There is gleeful laughter all down the train, and a hundred throats take up the absurd refrain, while amazement sits on the face of the dignified station-master. I descend at Massa, my thoughts full of the researches I am going to make in the Archivio di Stato: there is the same good-natured being, his body well out of the window, one hand waving

the briar pipe, the other upon his heart, singing in sentimental wise directly at another dignified station official: "Massa's in the cold ground!" And yet people say that the middle classes of England are without imagination! For my part I drive into the old capital city, having utterly forgotten the subject of my researches, engrossed in admiration of the fertile good-humoured British imagination that can squeeze a jest out of ducal Massa, and raise a rousing chorus out of princely Carrara.

THE SOVEREIGNS OF MASSA-CARRARA.

1. Lorenzo Cybo, 1st Cybo Marquis of Massa and Lord of Carrara (1500–1549).
2. Giulio Cybo, 2nd Marquis. Son of the preceding. Usurped the Marquisate and Lordship in 1546. Beheaded 1548.
3. Alberico I., Cybo-Malaspina, 3rd Marquis and 1st Prince of Massa, 3rd Lord and 1st Marquis of Carrara (1532–1623). Son of Lorenzo.
4. Carlo I., 2nd Prince of Massa (1581–1662). Grandson of the preceding.
5. Alberico II., 3rd Prince and 1st Duke of Massa, 1st Prince of Carrara (1607–1690). Son of the preceding.
6. Carlo II., 2nd Duke of Massa (1631–1710). Son of the preceding.
7. Alberico III., 3rd Duke of Massa (1674–1715). Son of the preceding.
8. Alderano I., 4th Duke of Massa (1690–1731). Brother to the above and to Cardinal Cammillo, the last male.
9. Maria Theresa, 5th Ducal Sovereign of Massa (1725–1790). Daughter of the above. Married Hercules III., last of the Estes.
10. Maria Beatrice Este, 6th Ducal Sovereign of Massa (1750–1829). Daughter of the above. Married 1771 Archduke Ferdinand.

11. Francis IV. (Austria-Este), Duke of Modena, Duke of Massa (1779–1846). Son of the above.

12. Francis V., Duke of Modena, Duke of Massa, &c. (1819–1875). Son of the above. Died s.p. and in exile.

[*Note.*—Carrara, both as Lordship, Marquisate, and Principality, was used as the title of the hereditary Prince of the State.]

CHAPTER VI

PIETRASANTA

It is at Pietrasanta that the Tuscan, or the lover of Tuscany, after exile north of the river Magra, feels that he is at home once more. The Duchy of Massa and the Principality of Carrara are indeed included in the modern "compartimento" of Tuscany, but they belong to the old territory of the Lunigiana, and are Tuscan neither in history, race, language nor feeling. More than one writer has said that the Commune of Pietrasanta is the most beautiful in Tuscany: no wonder then that the first instinct of the lover of Tuscany is to descend here, and have a peep at least (since he may not make a sojourn), at these first beginnings of the Garden of Italy. He will do well to obey his instinct. One may deplore the necessity of, but why despise, the between train and train visit to an interesting town. I would rather have spent seven hours in Rome than never have been in Rome at all. With a little preparation and a guide,—another thing not to be despised—much may be seen in Rome in seven hours, and much will become plain afterwards in the light of these seven hours which

before was dark. There are no guides in Pietrasanta, and it is difficult without books not readily obtainable, to prepare oneself beforehand for a proper glimpse of the place. It can only be, it shall only be, a glimpse, but I here propose, in the absence of any better *cicerone*, to act in some sort as guide to the first adventurous traveller who will take my advice and await the next train to Pisa or Florence.

It is 12.45 P.M., or it should be; it will more likely be 1.30, for a considerate company would not hasten a journey in which there is much to see, by any undue introduction of the gross material element of punctuality. My traveller is probably tired and hungry; I know he is thirsty, for he has been through the Genoa-Spezia tunnels. So, before entering the township at all, I take him into the Albergo Ballerini, facing the Rocchetta, where, without further circumlocution, let me tell all hungry, thirsty, tired travellers, that they will eat and drink, if in simple wise, yet of the best, and that here they may sleep, if they have a mind, in coolest sheets and cleanliest comfort. And while my traveller is restoring his flagging spirits in this most excellent hostelry, I beg leave to discourse to him a little in general terms on Pietrasanta and its fascinating history.

Pietrasanta is in the province of Lucca and the archidiocese of Pisa, fourteen miles from Lucca, eighteen from Pisa, six from Ducal Massa and nine from princely Carrara. More important still to old-fashioned people, it lies in that fertile pro-

vince, the Versilia, about which many books have been written.* Pietrasanta is not an old town as Italian towns go: it was built in the thirteenth century by the Lucchesi. The origin of the name, in spite of its obvious significance, is not known. There is a story that Guiscardo da Pietrasanta, a noble Milanese, potestà of Lucca in 1255, built the town in that year and gave it his name. But this story is refuted by the discovery of documents which show that the place was in existence in 1244. Like most frontier towns it has changed hands very often. It belonged to Lucca up to 1344, to Pisa from 1344 to 1369, went back to Lucca 1370 to 1437, then to Genoa up to 1446, then to the Banco di San Giorgio of Genoa as security for a loan raised by the Lucchesi; to Florence in 1484, in 1494 to Charles VIII. of France who sold it in 1496 to Lucca. Finally in 1513 Leo X. was asked to arbitrate as to its possession, and his Holiness awarded it to the Republic of Florence. Since that year it has practically followed the fate and fortunes of Florence. It was governed by a Capitano di Giustizia: hence the territory was known as the *Capitanato*, or Captainry, of Pietrasanta. Note that it was an isolated bit of Florentine territory, bounded on the south by the

* Notably "Saggio Storico della Versilia Antica e Moderna." By Ranieri Barbacciani-Fedele. Florence: 1845. And "Commentarii Storici sulla Versilia Centrale." By Vincenzo Santini. Pisa: 1859. 6 vols. This latter is the best and fullest book about Pietrasanta, a model of painstaking industry, and by no means dull in the reading. Needless to say how greatly indebted to it I am throughout this chapter.

Republic of Lucca, on the east by the Duchy of Modena, and on the north by the Duchy of Massa, well hemmed in, therefore, by enemies, and far enough away from the Mother Republic.

Pietrasanta, however, has once had an independent sovereign under circumstances, to me, of quite fascinating interest. Ferdinand I., Grand Duke of Tuscany, dying in 1609, left to his widow, Maria Christina of Lorraine, for life, the Captainries of Montepulciano and Pietrasanta, in which she was to have civil, criminal and military jurisdiction, and of which she was to enjoy the revenues, ordinary and extraordinary. This virtually made her sovereign of the Captainry of Pietrasanta, though I spy all manner of theoretical difficulties and niceties connected with fiefs and investitures which my traveller hurriedly, but politely, begs me to pass over on account of the brevity of his visit. The Pietrasantini were jubilant with delight, and big with great expectations, at being thus unexpectedly ennobled. Of course, Maria Christina's sovereignty brought her no new title—that much I insist on being allowed to explain ; Pietrasanta was no duchy or principality or county, but only a noble captainry : she was simply "Madama Serenissima," as fine a style and title as any great lady need desire. Maria Christina survived her husband twenty-seven years, and seems to have governed her tiny state in a model fashion. She died December 19, 1636. In her will she left ten dowries for girls of the people, and many masses to be said for

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Plate

COMMESTIBLES & FORNO IL GIGLIO

her soul's rest in the Collegiate Church. She did much to develop the marble industry of the Captainry which to-day is so flourishing, and battled bravely to subdue its plague of malaria which has now wholly disappeared. Santini has written the history of her beneficent reign,* and I do not wonder that he laments that the town should be without even a portrait of her, to say nothing of any other memorial.† On January 16, 1637, two ambassadors left Pietrasanta for Florence to offer public condolences to her grandson, Ferdinand II., now the reigning Grand Duke, and to do homage to him as the new sovereign of the Captainry of Pietrasanta. This shows most clearly how practically independent was the sovereignty of Maria Christina.

The incident of this reign would give the place great dignity and importance in the past. Somehow to this day Pietrasanta has a dignified and important bearing. As an instance of its importance it is actually mentioned by name—though ignorantly, carelessly, and vulgarly called a "district"—in the Treaty of Vienna (Art. 102). Affecting not to notice a politely stifled yawn of my traveller, and a trifling look of alarm in his face, I am soon fully launched upon the congenial task of explaining to him why the subject of Pietrasanta came up at the Congress of Vienna. I produce a map of the Grand Duchy of 1844;

* *Op. cit.* iii. 41.

† There are at least three portraits of her in the Gallery over the Ponte Vecchio at Florence.

any map after 1815 but before 1847 will do. I grant that the game is not very interesting without a map. On any such map you will notice four small portions of Tuscany, each separate in itself, each completely isolated from the other and the mother country. Two of them, Pietrasanta and Barga, lying almost parallel, are to the north of the Duchy of Lucca; the third, Fivizzano, lies to the north again of these two territories, and is almost surrounded by the Modenese States, except just at the north, where it touches the Duchy of Parma; and the fourth, Pontremoli, is the furthest north of these four Tuscan bits, and is bounded on the west by the kingdom of Sardinia, on the north and east by the Duchy of Parma, and on the south by the Stati Estensi. Then there are bits of Lucca wedged between the Stati Estensi and Tuscany, and a bittock of the Stati Estensi wedged in between Tuscany and Sardinia, while the Parmese Duchy of Guastalla is embedded in the Modenese State with the exception of a small frontier to the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom. As may be imagined, all these frontiers meant a very pretty arrangement of Custom-houses. Coming from the north-west a man might pass four Tuscan frontiers before he got comfortably into the Grand Duchy. Or coming from the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom he might, without much over-forcing of his journey, pass nine frontiers in about ninety miles, as thus: (1) Duchy of Parma; (2) Tuscany (Pontremoli); (3) Modena (Aulla); (4) Tuscany again (Fivizzano); (5) Modena again (Garfagnana);

(6) Lucca (Castiglione); (7) again Tuscany (Barga); (8) Lucca (the Duchy); and (9) Tuscany, the Grand Duchy at last, after some exciting Customs experiences.

But my traveller is taking out his watch and looking longingly towards the door, so I make haste to return to the Congress of Vienna and the part that Pietrasanta played in its deliberations. The Congress laid down that when the Duchy of Lucca became vacant (say by the succession of the governing Royal family to their own Duchy of Parma—I need not go into the other alternatives now) it was to be incorporated in the Grand Duchy. But Tuscany had already been allotted rich spoils under the Treaty—the whole of Elba, the Principality of Piombino, the States of the Praesidia; and it was thought that something more ought to be done for Modena. When, therefore, Tuscany came into Lucca, Modena was to have the Tuscan Vicariates (as they were then called) of Fivizzano, Pietrasanta, and Barga. The cession of Fivizzano one may contemplate calmly; the people are Lunigiani, their talk a dialect; but to detach from Tuscany two such pure Tuscan jewels as Pietrasanta and Barga was as mischievous a proposal as that mischievous Congress ever manifested. The evil, however, was averted by the wisdom of the three sovereigns of Tuscany, Modena, and Parma, with the adhesion of Austria and Sardinia; and in this wise. They made a treaty in 1844 by which it was agreed that Tuscany should cede Pontremoli, which adjoined the

Parmese dominions, to Parma, that Parma should in turn cede the Duchy of Guastalla (isolated from its territories) to Modena, and that Modena should renounce to Tuscany Pietrasanta and Barga, in return for Tuscany's having surrendered Pontremoli to Parma. The provisions of the Congress regarding Fivizzano were left untouched by the treaty of 1844, and in 1847 Duke Francis V. of Modena entered into possession of this place, together with the other detached bits of the Duchy of Lucca which were assigned to him by Art. 102 of the Treaty of Vienna. The effect of all this was wonderfully to simplify the frontier question. Worked out with a glance at the map these dry details suddenly become as interesting as a solution of the 15 puzzle, and I had the satisfaction of seeing my traveller, at first a little bit restive, brighten under the exhilarating influence of the game. The four Tuscan frontiers suddenly melt into one, and where before we had bewilderingly scattered confusion, now no single state has any territory outside its boundaries. But on the top of it all it is impossible not to wonder at the ponderous force of the circumstances which brought about these singular disjunctions of territory—Imperial fiefs did it mainly—and not to admire the power of the human brain that could live under it and survive it. The Grand Duke of Tuscany certainly had the best of this bargain, the Duke of Modena the worst; for with the absorption of Pietrasanta, which he voluntarily renounced from the highest motives, he would also have absorbed the only

other marble quarries (Seravezza, Stazzema) which in any way rivalled the great Carrara marble industry of his States.

I have evidently fully convinced my traveller of the importance of Pietrasanta in international statecraft, for he has spontaneously risen to his feet, and has led the way out of the inn as one who needs no further proof. Straight in front of us is the imposing Rocchetta, the city's powerful defence on the west side. It is connected by a subterranean passage with the hill on the other side of the town where stands the Rocca (hence our "Rook" at chess, which my traveller, an educated man and a chess-player, didn't know). Alas! until lately this city was completely walled and had three gates, the Pisa, the Lucca, and the Massa gate. Now but a section of the castellated walls remains, and only the Porta a Pisa. It is sad, and but that so much else remains, it would be difficult not to indulge in audible grumbling. Besides, we are Britishers, and these are communal, not international matters; the grumbling would come more graciously from aggrieved citizens than from discontented foreigners. We pass through the Porta a Pisa, which gives entrance to the town under the massive Rocchetta, and at the first glimpse of the noble piazza, all grumbles are left far behind, over the border in the Duchy of Massa, anywhere rather than in this elect corner of Tuscan magnificence. At the first glimpse of the piazza we understand well enough why Leopold II., the last reigning Grand Duke,

raised Pietrasanta, with not 5000 souls, from the rank of simple city to the dignity of noble city (città nobile). The word "noble" rises to our lips unbidden at every turn in Pietrasanta, much more so in its splendid piazza. On our right rises right nobly the Tower of the Hours—Torre delle Ore—further on the yellow-tinted marble façade of a noble Duomo, and in close company with it a lofty red-brick campanile, noble enough that also; just beyond it the communal palace, and over against that the old Palazzo Pretorio; to the right again, but at right angles to the Campanile, standing well out into the piazza, the old Church of the Austin Friars; close by, but forward somewhat, the statue of that Leopold who ennobled the city; and closing the piazza, the public fount of the Marzocco. As background to the picture, high up on a rising slope clad with olives, the remnant of the castellated walls, and for aught we can see now, the whole city might still be thus nobly girt. But what takes the eye and fancy most of all is the fine marble column crowned by a splendid specimen of the Florentine Marzocco, a noble lion sejant, holding in his dexter paw the arms of the Republic, argent, a fleur-de-lys florencée, gules. The lion is but the supporter of the arms—an instance of a single supporter—and may therefore be regarded as the prop of liberty. At all events the Pietrasantini call this column the *Colonna della Libertà*. It was erected in 1513 in rejoicing at the award of Leo X., which joined the fate of the Captainry to Florence. It is

extraordinary how Florentine the place became and has remained. In spite of the modern love of change, one of the principal streets is the Via Marzocco, the public fount is still lovingly called the Marzocco, and there is also a Via del Carroccio. Then, so far as a poor foreigner may judge, the *lingua fiorentina* seems to have resisted all incursions from the close-lying Garfagnana and the not-distant Lunigiana. Yet this was the territory which the Congress of Vienna proposed to de-Florentinise, nay, to de-Tuscanise! The Marzocco was, I grieve to think, removed in 1846 to make room for Leopold II.'s statue. No harm in that, of course, but instead of being re-erected at some other suitable point in the piazza, it was stowed away in a lumber room, presumably because it would overshadow the statue. It is difficult to understand how the Grand Duke—a wise and well-beloved sovereign—can have countenanced such anti-traditional vandalism. When the French troops invaded the Versilia at the end of the eighteenth century, the people of Pietrasanta took down and hid away their Marzocco, well knowing that these liberators might so much prize this emblem of liberty as to be unable to leave it behind them; nor did the people bring it forth again until they had seen the welcome heels of the invader and sung a full-throated *Te Deum* of rejoicing at his departure. All the more does the conduct of the city's magistrates in 1846 seem reprehensible. The Marzocco was re-erected in September 1903 (why not till

then I cannot say), at a better point than before, facing the Palazzo Pretorio, residence of so many captain-protectors of the liberties of the people, and it in no way interferes with the statue of Leopold, which well merits honour in a place he so honoured.*

I have left but little time for the churches, since my traveller is determined to get on to Pisa or Florence that evening. Turn to the left out of the piazza, down the Via Vittorio Emanuele, then to the right when you get out of the town, and, retired at the end of an avenue of planes, breathing the Franciscan atmosphere of simplicity and peace, is the Church and Convent of San Francesco in San Salvatore.† The traveller is surprised to notice that the church and a part of the building are painted one colour, and the rest of the building another. This is to mark off the part which is Government property, from that part which is nominally ‡ the property of the friars. For San Francesco is a parish church, and the Government own that and a sufficient portion of the convent as a residence for a parish priest. The rest of the convent was acquired for the friars,

* The sketch represents the other end of the piazza showing the Porta a Pisa and the Rocchetta from the inside. The Marzocco was still lying in its lumber room when the sketch was painted.

† The Church of Saint Francis in the parish of Saint Saviour's. The coincidence makes us think of Bartholomew of Pisa and his *Conformitates*.

‡ Nominally, for the Franciscan Order, even corporately, may not own property. The churches in which they officiate and the buildings which they occupy are always owned by somebody else, never by themselves.

and is inhabited by them. Church and convent date from 1522, though there was a Minorite hermitage here a hundred years before that date. Look into the cloister: it is that I have brought you here to see; look at the simple grace of those slender marble pillars, how pleasant to the eye. Consider the sympathetic feeling—do not trouble about the art—in the rude and recent frescoes of the life of the Saint which run all round the cloister; how good for heart and mind, are they not? The whole inclosure is paved, and the whole pavement is marble, so plentiful is that precious stone in central Versilia. In the church you should notice the pictures of the *Via Crucis*, done by an eighteenth-century friar of Pescia, unusually good of their kind, it seems to me; and you cannot fail to be struck by the elaborate marble and gilt rococo frames which surround them.

We must now return to the piazza, and go for a moment into the Church of Sant' Agostino. It is a finely proportioned building of a nave only, rising by two steps in the centre, again rising at the sanctuary, and again at the dim mystic-looking choir, which has a character all its own. It was built about the middle of the fourteenth century at the instance, tradition says, of the great war-captain, Castruccio Castracane. And tradition adds that one of his sons is buried here. On the right is a Nativity by Taddeo Zacchia, a Lucchese painter, locally much admired. I only dare say of it that it is devout in the extreme. The Austin hermits, after nearly five hundred years of religious

life here, were suppressed in the Napoleonic suppression. On the revival of the Grand Duchy, church and convent were given to the Clerks Regular of the Pious Schools, popularly called, in a country happy in its popular names, Scolopi, a contraction of *Scuole Pie*. These Religious have now also disappeared; the convent is used for the Communal schools; here, too, is housed the town library of 8000 volumes, made up in part of the library of San Francesco which we have just been visiting; the huge church has become the mere chapel of a Confraternity, and has now all the chill neglected air of a building no longer put to its right uses.

Our time is getting short; but I could have wished to detain my traveller for a long while in the Duomo, more for reflections, history, and talk, perhaps, than for "sights." Of it I may say briefly that it has sufficient beauties to be really artistic, but few of those pieces *d'autore* which call forth the approved inconclusive generalisations of the æsthete. It is not a Duomo at all, but a Collegiate Church, though one recognises the justice of the popular instinct which colloquially gives it Cathedral rank. If Pietrasanta ever become a bishopric, Monsignor Vescovo may well be proud of his ready-made Duomo. But I regret to say it is no longer officiated even with collegiate honours. There is a Provost, and two or three canons, but office is not said in choir, nor is Mass sung daily as in the lesser Versilian Collegiate Church of Camajore, which we will presently visit from Via-

reggio. The Duomo is full of fine marbles, many of them, the pulpit, the balustrade, for instance, the work of a famous local *cinquecento* sculptor, Stagio Stagi, architect also of the Campanile which was built in 1510. The whole fabric is striking in the extreme, and comes as a surprise even to one who is familiar with the recondite magnificence of the byways of Tuscany.

In the Lady Chapel is the ancient picture of the *Madonna del Sole*, the miraculous Madonna of the old Captainry, which is just now attracting the attention of the *Belle Arti* at Florence, and other critics and curious inquirers. More will be heard about it, I think, in the artistic world, and therefore a general word on the subject on the way back to the station may not be amiss. The picture, centuries ago, apparently hung in the guard-room of the Palazzo Pretorio. Two sbirri playing at dice one night, the loser in hot anger flung the dice at the picture, rushed upon it with his drawn dagger, and inflicted two stabs on the figure of the Madonna, from which, according to the story, blood flowed. At the same instant, the story goes on, with the mother's instinct of preservation, she changed the Bambino from her right arm to her left, where it now rests. At news of this miracle, the ancients decreed that the picture should at once be removed to the *Collegiata*. But the sbirri,—the offender immediately became a sincere penitent,—asked that a copy of the picture might be left in their guard-room as a perpetual memory of the event. It is this copy, and not the original, which is just now

attracting attention. It remained in the Palazzo Pretorio until the abolition of sbirri with the union of Italy, and was then transferred to the quarters of the modern carabineers. It is now safely housed in the Municipality, for it may prove to be no less a treasure than an original Berlinghieri, that Lucchese artist who painted the well-known picture of Saint Francis at Pescia. There are great differences between the so-called copy and the original in the Duomo; both pictures are undoubtedly inspired by the same idea, but the one is in no sense a copy of the other. In both pictures the Madonna is attended by the two Saint Johns, the Baptist and the Evangelist. In both pictures the two Saints are indicated in the same way, by the words *Ecce Agnus Dei* and *In principio erat verbum*. But in the picture in the Duomo the Madonna holds a pomegranate in her right hand; the Bambino blesses with his right hand, and in his left holds a scroll with the words *Pax vobis*. In the guard-room picture the Madonna has a bunch of cherries in her hand; the Bambino has no scroll, is not in the act of blessing, but of eating one of the cherries. Another significant fact: in the Duomo picture a species of royal pavilion behind the Madonna is *semé* of the arms of Pietrasanta.*

* Azure, within two pillars arched, a pillar surmounted by a ball, all proper (I think). Charles VIII. of France, who held Pietrasanta for three years, in 1495 changed the ball into azure with his three fleur-de-lys, or; but I do not know any specimen of the arms with this change. It is said that in the fourteenth century a gate, long since closed, the Ghibellina, and the Porta a Pisa, were exactly opposite one another, and a pillar surmounted

This clearly proves that the picture was put to some public use. The first use of the arms of Pietrasanta dates from the time of Castruccio Castracane, say 1316–1328, and it has been customary to assign the date of 1360 to the guard-room incident. The pavilion *semé* of the arms of Pietrasanta is wanting in the "copy," a most significant fact, for if it were to continue in a public room of the Captainry it would certainly have shown the arms. The fact of the matter is, that the so-called "copy" is much more ancient than the Duomo picture; its whole character demonstrates this, and the want of the arms alone proves to me its assuredly greater antiquity. But here comes the astounding part of the story, a fact which I have verified with my own eyes: this older picture has four or five small holes at irregular distances, just such as might have been caused by hurling a handful of dice at it; moreover, the figure of the Madonna has a cut in the neck, and a red mark on the knee, which may be the result of violence or injury to the canvas. Here, indeed, we get into the land of mystery and wonder. Has the wrong picture been venerated in the Duomo all these centuries? I think not; and as theories are flying thick and fast, I venture to add my own, only for the sake of promoting discussion, for at present it is mere guesswork.

The so-called "copy," as I have said, is undoubtedly

by a ball could be seen midway between the two as through a telescope: hence the arms. An idea of my own: Did not the ball, perhaps, make way for the Marzocco on the original pillar?

the older picture. An artist receiving a commission to paint a picture for the guard-room of the Palazzo Pretorio knew this older picture, had a devotion to it, perhaps, took his inspiration from it anyway, bringing it up to date in style, introducing the pomegranate instead of the cherries, for instance, and adding the arms of Pietrasanta, since it was for use in a public building. This picture of his was outraged just as history and tradition say, as witness the marks of violence on it, for I should have said before this that these are also to be seen in the picture in the Duomo. It was not a *copy* of the artist's picture which found its way into the guard-room in memory of the event, as historians narrate, but the old original picture from which the artist had drawn his inspiration. To this were artificially added the marks of dice and dagger, to make remembrance all the keener. How much more might not be said on the subject, but here the train dashes into the station with an absurd assumption of furiously trying to make up for time lost. My traveller and I shake hands heartily. He is an American, and "guesses" he's glad he broke his journey, and says that he wouldn't have missed seeing Pietrasanta for I forget how many dollars. The wise among my readers will assuredly follow his example, and it were my good fortune indeed if in seeking a *cicerone* on the platform, they would honour me with their preference and patronage.

CHAPTER VII

VIAREGGIO

VIAREGGIO, once in the Republic (1171-1805), then in the Principality (1805-1814), and then in the Duchy of Lucca (1817–1847), is now a flourishing sea-bathing place in the modern province of that name. For centuries there was little else there save a coast-defence tower and fort, and the grain warehouses which the fathers of a very fatherly Republic took care to keep replenished from outside to meet the deficiencies of the native harvest. John Evelyn, writing in his diary in 1644, says that one night on a journey from Lerici he "lodged in an obscure inn, at a place called Viregio (*sic*)." It must have been "obscure" indeed at that date. So lately as 1740 there were only some three hundred souls clustered round the tower in poor cottages. Until that date Viareggio was a most unhealthy place; the air was viciously malarial; and an official appointment there was shunned and dreaded. The deadly quality of the air, according to all accounts, seems to have been due to the mixing in the canal of the waters of the Lake Massaciuccoli with the salt water of the sea. A mathe-

matician, Zendrini of Venice,* whose name is big in Viareggian history, that year introduced a system of sluices into the canal which prevented the mixing of the waters, and, presto! (so it is said) the malaria disappeared. Certain it is that from 1748 onwards, if the place did not yet attract strangers, it became the fashion for the Lucchesi patricians to build themselves sea-side residences at Viareggio, and here, no longer under the immediate eyes of the severe moralists who ruled in the capital of the Republic, they were able to give themselves up more freely to the prevailing eighteenth-century rage for gambling. From three hundred in 1740, the population had grown to six thousand in the palmy days of the Duchy; it is now twenty thousand, and quite sixty thousand people come there during the summer months to enjoy the buoyant bath of the Tyrrhenian sea.

The picturesque old square tower which you see in the drawing was not the original tower of Viareggio; that lay further inland, and some poor remnants of it still remain: this tower was built in 1542. Once, at least, it figures in English history. In 1813 the dread Lord William Bentinck with the British fleet appeared off Viareggio, Lucca being then in alliance with France. The commandant of the fort, Ippolito Zibibbi, gave orders to fire on the English. A gunner—let me give him his name, Domenico Maffei—fired one solitary shot that fell short of the ships. The

* There is a Via Zendrini to keep his memory green: he deserves a statue.

reply of the English fleet to this one shot was so surprising, that Zibibbi and his men took to their heels, and never drew breath until they were safe inside the walls of Lucca. I have to speak of Zibibbi later on, so beg leave to tell an anecdote about him. One day on parade he severely reproved a guard for not having the buttons of his uniform properly clean, and put him under arrest on bread and water. But when dinner-time came the good commandant could not eat. "What's the matter with you?" asked his wife. "I'm thinking of that poor devil I've put on bread and water," he replied. "Well, let him out then," was the practical answer. Commandant Zibibbi immediately acted on the suggestion, and so was able to finish his dinner with good appetite. I tell this little story because it was the prisoner—Giacomo Bandoni—who afterwards found Shelley's body on the beach, and Zibibbi who assisted in the superintendence of its burning.*

But the fatherly Republic, having no enemies to fire upon, used the tower of Viareggio as a prison; and as all the virtues flourished exceedingly in this little State, the gaoler's office was something of a sinecure. In the present day it is still a prison for the minor offences within the competence of a *pretore* (magistrate). When I visited the old keep there were but two prisoners

* See Count Cesare Sardi's "Viareggio dal 1740 al 1820," (Lucca, 1899), a fascinating and living picture of old traditions and customs. I have with Count Sardi's leave most freely borrowed facts and figures from this interesting study.

there, both extremely cheerful and effusively delighted to see me. I wondered if they appreciated as I did the glorious air up there, the spacious solid cool quarters, the flaming sunsets,* and the view, over a pine-forest down to Leghorn, over another forest of pines up to the Ligurian shore, and behind, by way of amphitheatre, the range of the marble mountains of Massa and Carrara.

Maria Louisa of Bourbon (1782-1824), once Queen of Napoleon's artificial kingdom of Etruria, came to Lucca as Duchess in 1817, which she received as compensation for being temporarily kept out of the Duchy of Parma. Her little State numbered but 150,000 subjects. Its only port—Viareggio—had a mercantile marine of but 150 ships, the largest of them of eighty tons register. Her army consisted of 573 men all told, including the surgeons, the chaplain, the *état major* of thirty-seven officers, twenty-four gunners, nineteen chasseurs, and the ninety-eight musketeers, as the gensdarmes were called. The remainder made up a battalion consisting of two companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers, the crack corps this latter. The Royal Navy consisted of two tiny ships, the *Maria Luisa*, a *goletta* or small schooner, six guns and seventeen men, and a *bove*, which it would be complimentary to magnify

* Oh!
How beautiful is sunset, when the glow
Of heaven descends upon a land like thee,
Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!
JULIAN AND MADDALO.

into a ketch or xebec. The schooner seems to have made herself a nuisance to the ports of other Italian States by firing and requiring a salute of twenty-one guns. But, strange to say, the two little vessels had their practical uses. Charles X. of France had not yet scotched Barbary piracy by the taking of Algiers: as lately as 1805 two unfortunate women were carried off by Corsairs on the Pietrasanta road; nay, as lately as 1812 a picnic party in the *Pineta* had to fly before a surprise descent of pirates on the shore, leaving their provisions to the invader.

The port of Viareggio consists of two small basins approached by a narrow canal, the *Burlamacca* (shown in the sketch), and this canal is prolonged far out into the sea by two moles which make a most convenient and invigorating promenade. One of the basins dates back to 1606; the other was made by Duchess Maria Louisa. She took a strong liking to her port and seaside residence; did much for its advancement, and her works of improvement were continued on even a greater scale by Duke Charles Louis, her son and successor. The town grew and spread in parallelograms with—for Italy—quite American rapidity. It is, I should suppose, the largest *new* place in the whole of the peninsula. Mrs. Shelley, writing of 1821–1822, says, "no one then thought it possible to reside at Viareggio,"* an exaggeration, but reflecting accurately enough the travelled

* In her edition of Shelley's Works, vol. iv. p. 153.

foreigner's general estimate of the place. Twenty years later all that had been changed. Viareggio attracted a very select *monde*, and could boast among its residents of genius the Cavalier Pacini, the once popular author of a hundred forgotten operas.* Mrs. Stisted has left us a spirited account of her stay there in the early forties,† and has conveyed in the happiest fashion the simplicity and elegance, the mingled bonhommie and decorum of the Ducal Court. The Duke spent three or four months of every year at Viareggio. His mother had built a villa in the pine-woods to the south, and he himself built the beautiful Church which adjoins it. Here he lies buried (*ob.* 1882), as also his unhappy son, Charles III., struck down by an unknown assassin in the streets of Parma in 1854, and his daughter Margaret, known to the world as the Duchess of Madrid, and to some as the lawful Queen of Spain. An interesting spot truly, this Mausoleum of the Bourbons in an Italian pine-forest, and conjuring up an infinity of historical memories. The villa now belongs to the eldest daughter of the Duchess of Madrid, Bianca, wife of the Archduke Leopold Salvator.

Elisa Baciocchi, *née* Bonaparte, was Princess of Lucca from 1805, when the Republic was

* Note that if a man be habitually called "Cavaliere" or "Commendatore" in life, he is never likely to live among the immortals. Only think of the Cavalier Verdi! Pacini's "Saffo" is still, though very rarely, played. And there is a Piazza Pacini at Viareggio, and the theatre there, and at Pescia, is the R. Teatro Pacini.

† In her "Byways of Italy." London: Murray. 1845.

VIAREGGIO, THE PORT

"THE Port of Viareggio consists of two small basins approached by a narrow canal, the *Burlamacca* (shown in the sketch), and this canal is prolonged far out into the sea by two moles."

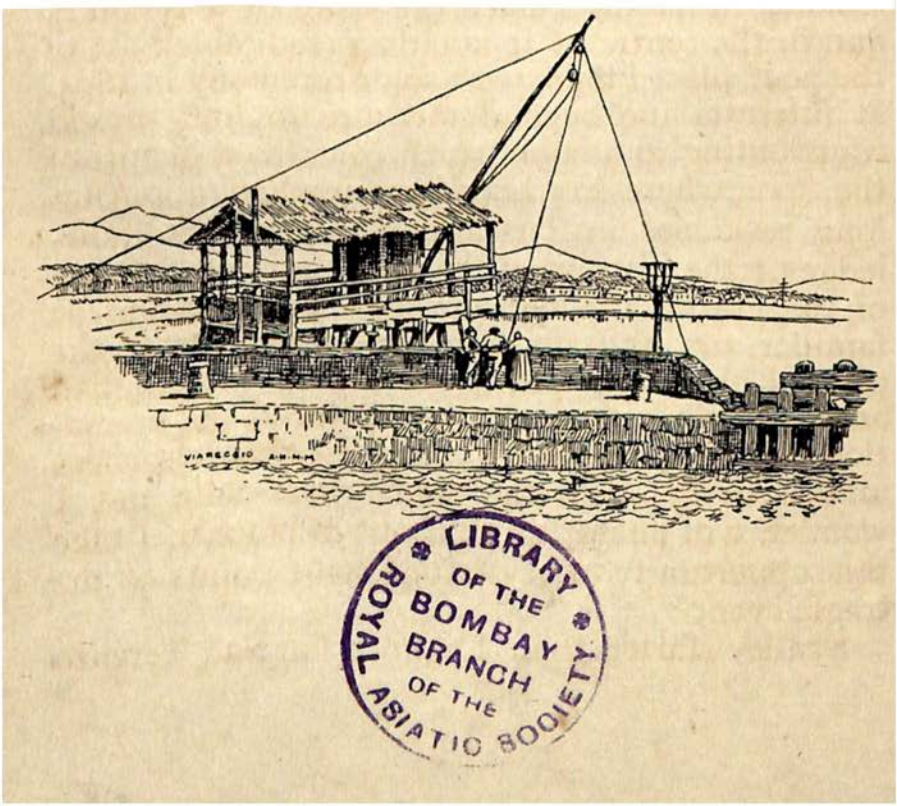
Plate 32

VIAREGGIO

made an end of by her king-making brother. To her, likewise, belongs some of the merit in attracting attention to Viareggio, but being also Governor of Tuscany, she could use Leghorn, and had not the same need of a port as the Duchess. Pauline Borghese, her more famous sister, built herself a palace here in 1809, still known as the Palazzo della Paolina, though now the summer quarters of the big boys' school at Lucca, the Regio Collegio. The Palazzo is a very charming low red brick building, painted inside in the most approved empire fashion. It stands just as it did in the days of the princess, except that some of the figures, that before had none, have received classic robes at a modern hand. The sea waves used to roll up to the very doors a hundred years ago, but are now nearly half a mile distant, so rapidly has the sea receded. The road which runs in front of it is called the Via della Costa, which indeed it was. At the time the palace was built it was far away from any habitation, and the Princess was thought foolhardy, nay mad, thus to court the danger of the cunning corsairs. The palace is well worth seeing. It is no show place, but do not fear to ask admission: no request is ever refused the polite stranger in genial Etruria.

Viareggio has an indescribable charm as a sea-bathing place. On analysing it, I think it consists in the mixture of free-and-easiness and decorum, or shall I say decency. The Tuscan is noisy but never rowdy, and his natural hilariousness is ever subject to the sacred canons of good manners. The amusements here are simple, but

entered into with great gusto, and as if they were the finest in the world. The place, too, is gaining ground as a winter residence. I know it in the spring and autumn, I know it in every month and season, and I protest that it is always delightful. A good many English go there; a good few live there. It has another charm: it is still cheap. Hotels and pensions are cheap (and good); small apartments are cheap, cabs and boats and baths are cheap, and living in general is cheap and easy to the happy temperament that has the gift of genial badinage and understands the droll art of bargaining by a mirthful interchange of quips and quirks.



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CHAPTER VIII

THE BURNING OF SHELLEY'S BODY

VIAREGGIO is perhaps chiefly interesting to Englishmen because here the body of Shelley was washed up on July 18, 1822. The town has sought to do him honour. The Piazza Paolina has become the Piazza Shelley (does his spirit triumph, I wonder, at having ousted the sister of a tyrant?), and in the centre of it stands a creditable bust of the poet, placed there with some ceremony in 1894. It interests me beyond measure to find myself contributing to a book which contains a picture of the spot where his body was washed up. After long residence in Tuscany, with a certain knowledge of the history, of the laws past and present, of the official life, old and new, of the country; familiar, too, as I am with the topography of the place, I have been led to notice that the English accounts of Shelley's death and burial and cremation leave a good deal to be desired in clearness and accuracy. Will the reader bear with me, I wonder, will he not think it out of place, if I take this opportunity of re-stating some points of the tragic event?

Shelley started from Leghorn for San Terenzo

on July 8, under circumstances well known, with Captain Williams and a sailor lad called Charles Vivian. It is interesting to note, what I have seen for myself,* that Shelley's boat was cleared from Leghorn as the *Don Juan*. Originally she was part-owned by Trelawny, Williams, and Shelley, but before being launched, Shelley had become sole owner at a cost of £80.† Trelawny had christened her the *Don Juan*, which was distasteful to Shelley, who re-named her the *Ariel*. But Byron had written to Captain Daniel Roberts, who was superintending her building at Genoa, to have the name *Don Juan* painted on the mainsail. And "thus disfigured," says Mrs. Shelley, she arrived at San Terenzo. Shelley and Williams set to work by turpentine, and spirits of wine, and ordinary washing, to try and remove the blot—in vain. The name had eventually to be cut out, and the sail patched. But it is certain that the boat was only re-named the *Ariel* in Shelley's fancy, and that officially she remained the *Don Juan*, as is proved by her having been cleared from Leghorn in that name on the fatal July 8. Poor Shelley is described in the register as her "Captain."

The *Don Juan* set sail between one and two o'clock. A terrific thunder squall overtook her off Viareggio, and the boat and her occupants disappeared from sight. Williams' body was washed

* In the Registers of Dues received, preserved in the Leghorn "Archivio Storico." Adversaries of the XIII Club may care to know that the *Don Juan's* Bill of Health was numbered 113.

† Dowden's "Life of Shelley," vol. ii. p. 504.

up on the shores of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, near the tower of Migliarino, to the north of the River Serchio, on July 17, having been ten days in the water. Prefessor Dowden hesitates between the 16th and 17th, but the latter date is borne witness to by two official documents in the Leghorn Record Office (vol. 242), copy letter of the Health Office to the Minister of the Interior, Florence, dated July 31, and copy letter of the Governor of Leghorn to the officer in charge of the tower of Migliarino, dated August 11, in which it is stated that Williams was actually buried on the 17th. The Sanitary Law of the Grand Duchy (Art. xxxix. of the "Regolamento") required that bodies cast up by the sea on a *rocky or sandy shore* should immediately be burnt. They were on no account to be touched by the hands of any of the guards; wood was to be collected and placed round the body; valuables, papers, and other effects were to be removed from the clothing by a species of long hook—the *ganci in asta*—and these hooks were to be used in all handling of the bodies. Where there was solid earth at hand, bodies might be buried instead of being burnt. The part of the coast where Williams' body was washed up is indicated by the law as a coast where burning is likely to be necessary. Williams, however, was buried, and we know from a letter of Don Neri Corsini, Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs,*

* Printed in Guido Biagi's invaluable book "Gli Ultimi Giorni di P. B. Shelley." Florence, 1892, p. 71. To Professor Biagi belongs the great merit of having been the first to publish import-

to the President of the "Buon Governo," that he was buried in a field near the shore, presumably with the permission of its owner. It is important to note that the use of quicklime in such cases was *not* prescribed by the Tuscan sanitary law.

Shelley's body was found the next day, July 18, on the shore above Viareggio, in the Duchy of Lucca. The Governor of Viareggio, G. B. Frediani, immediately advised the Lucchese Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs of the fact, reporting that he had the *same day* buried the body with quicklime in a place above the shore line. He assumes that the body is Shelley's because an English book has been found in one of the pockets, and he gives an exact description of the poet's dress, adding that "*il tutto*," the book and the dress, &c., have also been buried in accordance with the regulations.* Professor Dowden states (p. 529) that Trelawny saw Shelley's body the following day, the 19th. That is impossible, as is proved by the Governor's letter. Besides, according to the special sanitary regulations for Viareggio (Article ix.) every object washed ashore had to be burned or buried *tosto*, immediately.† The reason why quicklime was used in Shelley's case and not Williams' was, no doubt, because the shore of the

ant official documents which have thrown much light on a somewhat complicated subject.

* Biagi, p. 61.

† Archivio di Stato, Lucca. R. Intima Segreteria di Gabinetto. 1819. Protocol No. 1625. "Regolamento d'osservarsi sul littorale di Viareggio," Art. ix.

Duchy was arid and sandy, and ordinary burial would not be considered sufficient precaution.

The body of Charles Vivian was washed up in yet another state, the Duchy of Massa and Principality of Carrara, on July 19. It seems odd to us to reflect that in those days, in the forty miles sail between Leghorn and Spezia, the coasts of four states had to be passed, namely, Tuscany, Lucca, Massa-Carrara, and Sardinia. I have seen in the Archivio di Stato at Massa the letter of the Sanitary Inspector of the coast, reporting the finding of the body and recommending that it should be burnt forthwith, but I could not, even with kindly expert help, discover the act showing that the burning had actually taken place, as it undoubtedly did. Trelawny quotes a letter he received from Domenico Simoncini, Chief Health Officer of Viareggio, informing him that on July 18 a body, clothed in a cotton waistcoat, white and blue striped trowsers and a cambric shirt, had been cast up at Massa, and "that this body was burnt on the shore and the ashes interred in the sand."* It is strange that Trelawny should have stated in the same book (vol. i. p. 191), that Vivian's body was not found "until three weeks after the wreck of the boat," but then his whole narrative abounds with inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

Trelawny writes as if he had first seen Shelley's body and then Williams'.† This is quite impossible, for the latter was already buried by the evening

* "Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author," 1878, ii. p. 239.
† "Records," i. 189–190.

of July 17. Moreover, the Commandant of the Tower at the mouth of the Serchio expressly states in an official letter,* that the body had never been identified. Professor Dowden † is assuredly correct in saying that Williams' body "had been buried in the sand thirty hours before Trelawny's arrival on the spot." Trelawny, through loss of memory, no doubt, speaks of incidents which occurred later on at the exhumation of the body, as if they had happened at the finding of the body. On each occasion he represents himself as having a boot of Williams' with him which matched the boot found on the body. This is utterly improbable on the first occasion, even if he had been there, and the fact that he had on the second occasion may have been suggested to him by having learnt from the guards that the body had been washed up with one boot.

The friends and relations of Shelley and Williams desired that their bodies might be exhumed and taken, Shelley's to Rome and Williams' to England. There is no thought on their part of any ceremony of cremation, or any desire for the ashes. But the sanitary law of neither state contemplated any such exhumation. The British Envoy at Florence, Mr. W. Dawkins, who also represented Great Britain at the Court of Lucca, intervened, and, on July 27, presented the request of the relatives and friends, limiting himself to asking that the *remains* should be transferred to the British cemetery at Leghorn.‡

* Biagi, p. 73. † "Life," ii. p. 529. ‡ Biagi, p. 71.

THE SEA-COAST NORTH OF VIAREGGIO

NEAR the spot where Shelley's body was cremated, August 18, 1828. "The situation was well calculated for a poet's grave. In front was a magnificent extent of the blue and windless Mediterranean—on the other side, an almost boundless extent of sandy wilderness here and there interspersed in tufts with underwood, curved by the sea breeze. . . . This view was bounded by an immense extent of the Italian Alps, which are here particularly picturesque from their volcanic and manifold appearances."—*Medwin.*

Plate 33

In the case of Williams the sanitary authorities of Tuscany made difficulties. Who first suggested that these difficulties might be overcome by burning the remains, does not seem clear, but on August 6, Mr. Dawkins amended the form of his request to Prince Corsini by asking that Williams' body *or his ashes* might be transferred to the British Cemetery at Leghorn, with a view to being sent thence to England.* The Health Authorities at Leghorn were consulted on the subject, and the Governor of that city replied in a letter dated August 7, that there could not be the slightest objection to the course proposed, as the burning of bodies on the shore was contemplated by the Tuscan Sanitary Law.†

The request of Mr. Dawkins to the Government of Lucca that Shelley's *remains* might be transferred to Leghorn was granted without any difficulty. There was never any question with the Lucca authorities of burning Shelley's remains; no anxiety on the score of infection could arise, for they had been buried in quicklime. Mr. Dawkins, writing to Trelawny on July 28, from Lucca, says :‡ "An order was sent yesterday from hence to the Governor of Viareggio to deliver up the *remains* of Mr. Shelley to you, or any person empowered by you to receive them. I said they were to

* Biagi, pp. 75–76.

† This letter has been printed by Professor Biagi (p. 77), from the original at Florence, but as undated. The copy at Leghorn (vol. 242, "Archiv. Stor.") gives the date as August 7.

‡ "Records," i. 194.

be removed to Leghorn for interment, but that need not bind you. . . . Quicklime has been thrown into the graves [*sic*, but read *grave*, for only one grave is in question] as is usual in similar cases." There is no question, because no need, of their being burned. Signor Biagi has reproduced the order sent to the Governor of Viareggio.* It is dated July 27, and, as Mr. Dawkins says, fully authorises the exhumation and removal of Shelley's body. How comes it then that the remains were burned? It seems to me likely enough that the *necessity* of burning Williams' body suggested to Trelawny's romantic fancy the *fitness* of a like proceeding in the case of Shelley. But assuredly such a thing could not have been done without the sanction of the Lucca authorities. How and when was this obtained? This point remains involved in obscurity, but I can only suppose that Trelawny would urge upon the Governor that the burning of Shelley's remains was an extra and desirable precaution, and this argument would appeal strongly to the official of a country where the Sanitary Law had been elevated to the rank of a first-class fetish. Professor Dowden † states that "the form of permission obtained by Trelawny [for the exhumation of Williams' body], and presented to the Governor of the Tower of Migliarino, at the Bocca Lericcio,‡ made no mention of the burning of the bodies,§ and

* Biagi, p. 68. † "Life," ii. p. 530.

‡ *Sic*, and copied from Trelawny. It should be Bocca del Serchio, the mouth of the River Serchio.

§ Read "body."

it needed some little persuasion to obtain his consent." This cannot have been the case. The copy of the permission still exists in the Leghorn Record Office, and as I believe it has never before been printed, I give it in translation:

"LEGHORN, *August 11th*, 1822.

"In accordance with orders received the body thrown on to the beach at Migliarino and there buried on the 17th July last, may be disinterred for the purpose of being consigned to the flames and the ashes given to the bearer of this, Antonio Gori, sanitary guard of this port, who will assist at and direct the aforesaid operation so that it may be carried out with all those precautions prescribed by the invaluable (*preziose*) sanitary regulations.

"(Signed) SPANNOCCHI."*

I do not know where Trelawny speaks of the difficulty that Professor Dowden says he encountered; certainly not in the "Records," where he writes (i. 105): "So I anchored, landed, called on the officer in command, a major, and told him my object in coming, of which he was already apprised by his own Government. He assured me I should have every aid from him." But it is likely enough that Trelawny did encounter difficulties the next day at Viareggio, for, as I have shown, there was no talk of any funeral pyre in the authorisation sent to the Governor of Viareggio.

* (The Governor of Leghorn.) Let me here express my thanks to Professor Pietro Vigo, founder of the Leghorn Record Office, and its first and present keeper, for much assistance kindly given me in these researches. He has himself printed two unpublished documents connected with the finding of the *Don Juan*, one of which gives the official inventory of what was found on board her ("Il Naufragio di P. B. Shelley" in the "Rivista Marittima" for July 1903).

Williams' remains were burned on August 15. Trelawny, with his friend Captain Shenley, apparently left Leghorn for Migliarino in the *Bolivar* on the 14th, though the last time this vessel appears in the Leghorn clearance Register is August 5. He anchored off Migliarino, not off Viareggio, as Professor Dowden says (ii. 531), and slept that night in an inn. The next morning he proceeded up the coast in the commandant's boat, nearing the boundary of the two States of Tuscany and Lucca, and there Williams' body was exhumed and burned. Byron and Leigh Hunt were present. Trelawny has put on record a most graphic description of the scene. And then, Byron and Hunt having gone back to Pisa, "I returned," he says, "with my party in the same way we came, and supped and slept at the inn. On the following morning we went on board the same boat, with the same things and party, and rowed down the little river near Viareggio to the sea, pulled along the coast towards Massa, then landed, and began our preparations as before." * There is, as Professor Biagi has pointed out, some grave lapse of memory here. Trelawny could not have gone from the Tuscan to the Lucchese State with "the same party," the same guards and soldiers that is, any more than a party of French soldiers and guards could cross the German frontier and there perform services peculiar to German guards and soldiers. Then how, if he slept at Migliarino, could he have come down to the sea by a little river near Via-

* "Records," i. 210.

reggio? It seems to me that he is obviously referring to the *Burlamacca*, the canal shown in the sketch, which runs through Viareggio, and in that case he must have slept at an inn in Viareggio, and not at Migliarino. This is confirmed by the account of the matter which he wrote down at the time of the burning of Shelley's body, printed in the appendix to the "Records" (ii. 233). "At ten on the following morning," he says, "Captain S(henley) and myself, accompanied by several officers of the *town* [*i.e.*, Viareggio], proceeded in our boat down the small river which runs through Viareggio (and forms its harbour for coasting-vessels) to the sea [this is clearly enough the *Burlamacca*]. Keeping along the beach towards Massa we landed at about a mile from [*i.e.*, above] Viareggio, at the foot of the grave." This is all reasonable enough, and disposes of the fantastic story in the "Records" that he was accompanied by Tuscan soldiers and guards. I bring out this matter to show how seriously inaccurate the "Records" are, and how each statement in them requires carefully sifting word by word. Even the account written by Trelawny at the time is dated August 15, whereas the burning of Shelley's body took place on the 16th!

Byron and Leigh Hunt were again present. Byron "wandered away from the spectacle and did not see it. I remained inside the carriage, now looking on, now drawing back with feelings that were not to be witnessed."* Trelawny's account of

* Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography," chap. xix.

the finding and burning of Shelley's body is thrilling in the extreme, but it clashes utterly with the official account. He leads us to believe that, although the body had been thirty days in quicklime, yet "whether, owing to the water or other cause, it had not further decomposed, but was precisely in the same state as when interred."* This I take from the account written at the time. "The legs had both separated at the knee-joints," he goes on, ". . . the hands were likewise parted at the wrists. . . ." But in the "Records" he says: "The limbs did *not* separate from the trunk, as in the case of Williams' body, so that the corpse was removed entire to the furnace."† Then comes the astounding statement: "The corpse fell open and the heart was laid bare." And: "The only portions that were not consumed were some fragments of bones, the jaw, and the skull; but what surprised us all was that the heart remained entire. In snatching this relic from the fiery furnace, my hand was severely burnt;‡ and had any one seen me do the act I should have been put in quarantine."§

The burning was carried out under the superintendence of Domenico Simoncini, chief health officer, and Ippolito Zibibbi, commandant of the place, to whom the reader has already been introduced. At four o'clock in the afternoon a *procés*

* "Records," ii. p. 234. † "Records," i. 212.

‡ No wonder, for he has just told us that "the fire was so fierce as to produce a white heat on the iron."

§ "Records," i. 213.

verbal of the proceedings was drawn up in duplicate and signed by Byron, Trelawny, and these two officers. The *procés verbal* and the covering letter with which it was sent by the Governor of Viareggio to the Minister for Home and Foreign Affairs at Lucca, are printed at length in Professor Biagi's invaluable book.* Trelawny in 1878 published a translation of it,† from which he omits a most important statement. Let us compare the mutilated with the complete version:

TRELAWNY.

"Attended by this gentleman, by the Major commanding the place, and the Royal Marine of the Duchy, and by his Excellency Lord Noel Byron, an English peer, we proceeded to the eastern shore, and arrived at the spot where the above-mentioned corpse had been buried. After recognition made according to the legal forms of the Tribunal, we caused the ground to be opened, and found the remains of the above-mentioned corpse. The said remains were placed in an iron furnace, there burnt and reduced to ashes."

THE ORIGINAL.

". . . assisted by the Major commanding the place and the Royal Marine of the Duchy, and by his Excellency Lord Noel Byron, peer of England, we proceeded to the eastern shore, and having reached the spot where we had caused the said body to be buried after cognizance had been taken in due form by the Tribunal, we caused the ground to be opened there and found *the bones only of the aforesaid body, the flesh having been consumed by the lime placed there at the time of burial in accordance with existing regulations*, and the said *bones* were placed *with the usual formalities of the sanitary law* in an iron furnace, and then burnt and reduced to ashes."

How are we to account for the omission of this

* Biagi, pp. 98–100.

† "Records," Appendix iv. ii. p. 237.

crucial item of the *procés verbal?* Not by deliberate suppression, of course, for Trelawny was an honourable man. He translates badly: *ossa*, bones, as "remains" for instance, but that may be due to a defective knowledge of Italian, and he omits the very important attesting signature of Zibibbi, but that may have been a slip. Still, the point arises: which are we to believe, the Trelawny of 1822 who signed an official account stating that only a skeleton was found, or the Trelawny of the "Records," who states that a corpse with flesh was found? Of course if there were but the bare bones left there would be no heart to snatch from the flames. It is extremely difficult to believe in this story of a heart picked out entire from the heat of a blazing furnace. An Italian writer says that Shelley's heart would not burn because it was "saturated with poetic fire and love, more potent than the flame, and stronger than death"; but that is—poetry. The late Professor Alessi* undertook to explain the phenomenon on chemical principles, but did not live to do so. Poor Shelley's body had first been in the water ten whole days, and then lay twenty-nine days in quicklime. A distinguished medical authority, whom I consulted on the subject, told me that parts of a full-grown body *might* remain after a month's burial in quicklime, but not if that body had first been subjected to the action of salt water for ten days. The official account, therefore,

* "Dalla Culla alla Tomba di Percy Bysshe Shelley," Leghorn, 1893, p. 45.

tallies with the conclusions of science. The heart, says my authority, being tough and well protected by the thorax, *might* have come out of this drastic ordeal of salt water and quicklime, certainly not fresh and ruddy, but in a mummified condition perhaps. One thing is certain, that the heart could never for an instant have survived the white heat of that burning fiery furnace on the beach of Viareggio. If Trelawny succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the guards and abstracting the heart —sole remnant of the body—it must have been before the skeleton was placed on the fire. He burnt his hand, he tells us, and Mrs. Shelley tells us he burnt his hands "by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose."* Trelawny, writing long years afterwards, must have confounded the touching of the ashes with the taking of the heart. It is noteworthy that he makes no mention of the singular phenomenon in his account written at the time. But it is not permissible to doubt that he somehow obtained possession of the heart. He is congenitally inaccurate, colours highly, clips, suppresses, mistranslates, sees that which does not exist, but, as an honourable man, is assuredly incapable of a cruel and deliberate invention. Byron, too, writes to Moore (August 27, 1822): "We have been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams on the seashore to render them fit for removal and regular interment. . . All of

* "Works," vol. iv. p. 234.

Shelley was consumed except the *heart*,* which would not take the flame, and is now preserved in spirits of wine."† But Byron does not say that he has *seen* the heart. Locke, too, who was present at the scene and has described it, makes no mention of the incident in his life of Byron; and still more strange, Hunt, to whom according to Professor Dowden, the relics of Shelley's heart were given by Trelawny, is silent on the subject in his autobiography. It is only fair to mention that there has always been a tradition in Viareggio that the heart was saved. Signor Del Beccaro, present secretary to the Commune, learnt from an old uncle, secretary to the Commune at the time of Shelley's death, that the heart had become encased in lime, and hence would not "take the flame." This explanation may be worthy of scientific examination.

Professor Biagi‡ is of the opinion that the official statement is false; that Simoncini was bribed by Trelawny to let him take the heart, that the talk of bones only is to blind the superior authority. Trelawny gave Simoncini a telescope after the event, the receipt of which he acknowledges in a letter printed by Trelawny dated August 29, 1822.§ Certainly a telescope would not have induced him to tamper with the sacred sanitary law, and I do not believe any sum of money would have either. And what of Zibibbi? Was he bribed too? And all the guards who

* Italics Byron's.

† "Works, Letters and Journals," vol. vi. 1901, p. 108.

‡ *Op. cit.* pp. 101–102.

§ "Records," ii. 239.

assisted, and the populace who looked on? I find it impossible to accept this theory of the learned librarian of the Laurenziana. There were plenty of spectators of the exhumation, and the marvel of a body unconsumed by quicklime would assuredly have got noised abroad and reached the Governor's ears. Was *he* bribed too? Besides, leaving aside the natural rectitude and incorruptibility of the Italian official, the idol of the sanitary regulations was so deeply believed in and worshipped by the officials themselves; was regarded with such genuine awe and fear and reverence that it is impossible to imagine that two distinguished officials, and their subordinates, would have been guilty of so grave a dereliction of duty. Far rather would they have covered themselves with honour by pointing out the fallibility of quicklime, and suggesting the invariable adoption of the safer method of combustion.*

* I have before me the proof-sheets of a book (incomplete, alas! and, I fear, never to be completed or published) giving, after the manner of our Calendars of State Papers, a summary of the Tuscan quarantine and health laws from 1161 to 1753. The plan of the work would have brought it down to 1841. The author is Dr. Giovanni Battista Colletti. The proofs are the property of Dr. Diomede Bonamici, the well-known bibliographer, who kindly entrusted me with so precious a treasure. A perusal of this work fully justifies the epithets "fetish" and "idol" which I have applied to the sanitary law.

•To live in Tuscany is to receive daily courtesies, to return hourly thanks for favours received. But how could I ever sufficiently thank Dr. Bonamici, to whose fine library, to whose huge unpublished bibliography, I have daily access? He knows something of my gratitude, but I here beg leave to express to him public and most heartfelt thanks.

I conclude, then, positively, that only the skeleton of Shelley's body was found on that memorable August 16, and, all the more for that reason, that there was no need for the ceremony of burning. I have another piece of evidence to this effect. Professor Biagi in 1890 hit upon the excellent device of going to Viareggio, and, with the help of the Captain of the Port, interrogating some of the old fisherfolk and sailors who could remember the event. By this means he was able to identify, as nearly as that could be done, the exact spot of the funeral pyre. It lies just outside the north end of modern Viareggio (though far enough from the Viareggio of 1822), in a great open space, midway between the "Ospizio Marino Vittorio Emanuele" and the Pineta, and, so greatly has the sea receded, about five hundred yards from the shore. The Municipality of Viareggio, in the same year, took the depositions on oath of several of these old people. By the great kindness of the present Sindaco, the Cav. Raimondo del Prete and his secretary (more favours and more thanks), I am in possession of a copy of these valuable depositions. One old man, Raffaello Simonetti, deposed that he was a ship's "boy" in 1822; that he was present at the burning of Shelley's body, and threw some butcher's-broom on the fire in spite of the guard trying to keep him off. And in the course of the deposition he states: "the body, reduced to bones only from the quicklime in which it was buried, was placed in a species of furnace, &c." I do not wish to lay too much stress on the evidence given

by an old man of seventy-three, sixty-eight years after the event, but the circumstantial nature of the whole deposition bears witness to an unusual event having been deeply impressed on his memory.

There is another extraordinary circumstance in connection with the burning of Shelley's body which is worth examining. Trelawny * states that a volume of "Æschylus" † was found in one of Shelley's pockets, and "Keats' Poems" in the other. We have seen that the Governor of Viareggio in his report of the circumstance to the Minister for Home and Foreign Affairs refers to an English book only. This he obviously did to prove that the body was that of an Englishman, and does not exclude the existence of a second book. But the Governor reports that the body and *everything* found on it was buried. Professor Dowden states that at the exhumation, only the binding remained of the volume of Keats which had been buried, and that this was cast upon the pyre.‡ But of the "Sophocles" he writes that it is preserved at Boscombe Manor.§ How did this book, and not the Keats, escape the devouring action of the quicklime? And even if it did, how could it escape the vigilance of Zibibbi, Simoncini, and their guards? Was it surreptitiously taken by Trelawny before the burial? If he could save

* "Records," i. 189.

† Corrected by Professor Dowden to "Sophocles," "Life," ii 529.

‡ "Life," ii. 533.

§ *Ibid.* ii. 529 (note).

the "Sophocles," then why not also the Keats? It seems so entirely improbable that this book should have escaped, that I cannot help thinking that the "Sophocles" to which Shelley's biographer refers is another book, saved from a much less serious wreck. Trelawny, who narrates the circumstance,* calls it an "Æschylus," but this is not the first time that he has confounded the two Greek dramatists. Shelley's skiff had capsized while he was bathing at San Terenzo, and his things had fallen into the water. "In a few minutes he reappeared, rushing down to secure his former attire. Speedily coming back, he held up a book, saying, 'I have recovered this priceless gem from the wreck' (Æschylus)."

There are other points connected with the death of Shelley which require elucidation; and it is earnestly to be desired that *all* official documents relating to the matter, whether Tuscan, Lucchese, or British, should be collected together in one volume for handy reference. This would immensely facilitate the study of the subject, and possibly have the effect of clearing up all that is dark and dubious in the tragic end of Shelley and his poor friend Williams.

* "Records," i. 169.

CHAPTER IX

CAMAJORE

CAMAJORE is situated in the ancient province of Versilia and the modern province of Lucca, fifteen miles from Lucca, twenty miles from Pisa, and eleven miles from Massa. It can now be conveniently reached from Viareggio by one of those steam trams which are such a familiar feature in the Tuscan contrade, and which run merrily along the high road through picturesque villages and valleys, as if all the countryside belonged to them. The local historian* will have it that the name derives not from *Ca*(mpus) *Major*, but from the nobler *Ca*(stra) *Majora*, Sempronius Longus having encamped in the Versilia against Hannibal, and this explanation may well enough be true. Camajore, the little town of brick and stone with its 5000 souls, is but the chief place or capital of Camajore, the smiling tract of olive orchards,

* "Di Camajore come città della Versilia." By Giovanni Battista Rinuccini, Florence, 1858. Crammed with solid learning, a bit dry here and there perhaps, but never heavy, an intricate subject handled and exposed clearly, quite a model of treatment in fact, the Camajoresi are fortunate in their chronicle and their chronicler. The admixture of a glowing local patriotism and a sincere but unostentatious piety proves an agreeable preservative against dryness in the details and dulness in the narrative.

dotted with farmsteads and villages, which make up the Commune of 17,000 souls. Giovan Battista Rinuccini, the local chronicler, has well said that the Municipal Commune is the association most founded in nature after that of the family. The modern Commune, often tiny enough—there are some 10,000 of them in Italy—has preserved for us a type of the primitive aggregation of families, the embryo State, and is therefore of the highest interest. Each Commune manages its own affairs, by means of an elected body of councillors, whose head, in modern days, is called a Sindaco, or Mayor. The smaller the Commune the keener it is about its affairs, and the better, on the whole, are they managed. In Camajore the spirit of communal pride and independence is very strong, and the influence of the big brother at Lucca, capital once of the State, now of the Province, is jealously watched and often keenly resented. Under its old communal statute Camajore had forty-two councillors, of whom twelve were elected captains, the senior being called the Prior. The Council was elected every six months. Its deliberations were absolutely free. The Government Commissary might be present at a general assembly, but had no vote. This was the Constitution of free Camajore until abolished by the liberating French Republic.

I find it difficult to write with moderation of this elect Commune when speaking in its praise. All the more, therefore, do I find it difficult to write with moderation when speaking of the de-

plorable vandalism which has taken place in its capital in the nineteenth century. Camajore was a completely walled town with three picturesque gates and many picturesque towers. The walls were built in 1374 by decree of the Magnificent Council of the Ancients. Two of the gates have gone; all the towers; and the remnants of the walls which are left are in progress of complete demolition in this twentieth century. But that I so love the place and its people, I would dip my pen in vinegar and so sour my reader's affections that he would never turn aside from Viareggio to see it and them. There was, I think, an American millionaire who offered to buy up at a handsome figure that exquisite city of towers, San Gemignano, so that it might for ever be kept as it was built. Here is a very practical use for the millions amassed in Chicago: the new world could not better justify its existence than by protecting the monuments of the old. One only of the gates of Camajore is left, the Porta di Mezzo. This sketch shows it from the inside; above the arch is a fresco of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Benedict in his black cowl, and the ever popular Saint Rock. Beyond the gate is a stone triumphal arch, erected by the Republic to commemorate the loyalty of the Camajoresi who came to the aid of the Ancients, besieged in their own palace, during a popular tumult at Lucca in 1531. The Archbishop of Lucca, on his pastoral visits, still continues to enter the town by the arch and the gate, though it takes him out of the way to do so; and

this is the sole reminiscence of the fact that Camajore was once a nobly walled and towered township which could only be entered by gates.

The "sight" of the place is the Abbey church of San Pietro, situate about half a mile outside the town. It is one of the oldest Benedictine churches in the world. Saint Benedict died in 543, the solemn confirmation of the Rule by the great Gregory took place in 590, and the local historian proudly places the foundation of the church at "a few lustres later." Certainly it was flourishing in the eighth century, and documents of that century concerning it survive. The Abbey was suppressed in 1400, and its rich revenues taken to found a hospital in Lucca. Indignation, of course, in the Commune of Camajore, which thus lost a source of relieving its poor, and saw revenues, which had been at its very gates, taken to benefit the overbearing and ever-encroaching capital! The monastic buildings have disappeared, but the Lombard church with its square pillars is entire (all save the tower, which is modern) and in excellent preservation. It has been restored admirably, so far as I am able to judge of such matters. Let not the æsthetic traveller be shocked by the rococo altar which stands detached in the middle of the church. It contains the *Madonna della Pietà*, the Madonna of the Camajoresi; and the votive offerings which surround it have a more eloquent history than the Abbey church itself, for they tell of the hopes and fears, the joys, the sorrows, the deliverances, the gratitude of

countless Camajoresi, and we need no printed book to read the moving story.

Quite imposing for a place of the size is the collegiate church of the *Assunta*. I could have told before I got there, from a most superficial idea of Camajore, that its church would certainly be collegiate. As a matter of fact, it has been since 1515. Nothing is nobler in the religious history of the Middle Ages than the efforts, the sacrifices, which mere townlets have made to supply the want of the solemn worship of a cathedral by cathedral services in collegiate churches. At the end of the eighteenth century there were fourteen canons and eight chaplains attached to this church. The number is now reduced, but the Divine office is said in choir daily, and there is daily sung Mass. I know nothing quite like the character and distinction which a properly officiated collegiate church confers upon one of these small self-governing townships, which in our English eyes are little larger than big villages. But it was peculiar to mediæval Europe to seek greatness by association with the Infinite, and that influence has survived to the present day.

The most interesting object in the *Assunta* is a monogram of the Holy Name (IHS),* left there

* It is singular, but I have often heard people interpret this well-known abbreviation of the name of Jesus as *J*(esus) *H*(oly) *S*(aviour); and one person, more learned than the rest, as *J*(esus) *H*(ominum) *S*(alvator). These queer guesses are probably due to the fact that a full-stop is sometimes erroneously placed after each letter in certain modern examples of the monogram.

by Saint Bernardine of Siena in 1410 after he had been preaching that devotion in Camajore for the first time. I suppose the reader is familiar with these wooden tablets of Saint Bernardine. There is a famous example in the Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi. The monogram is usually painted in gold letters surrounded by golden rays, on a blue ground. The saint carried these tablets about with him and generally had one in the pulpit when he was preaching. At Bologna, once, he inveighed against card-playing with such success that all the playing-cards in the place were destroyed. A poor painter of cards remonstrated with the Saint for thus depriving him of his living. Saint Bernardine showed him the $\overline{\text{IHS}}$ and advised him to copy it instead. The painter of playing cards, leaving profane for sacred art, suddenly found himself with more custom than he could deal with, and wealth beyond his dreams. But to return to Camajore. Saint Bernardine promised its inhabitants that as long as they preserved this particular monogram with due veneration the town would remain free from plague—what a privilege in the Middle Ages—and infectious disease; and so great was faith in those days that, when the plague broke out in other parts of the Republic, people would take refuge within the walls of Camajore, certain of being quite safe there. Saint Leonard of Port Maurice, whose name will somehow find its way into my writings, renewed the promise of Saint Bernardine in 1731 and 1751, under dramatic cir-

CAMAJORE

"A PICTURESQUE little rectangular town, retaining much of its mediæval fortifications and several gates."

Plate 34

cumstances. And the town remained immune from infectious disease, so runs the story, until 1854–1855, when it lost the privilege, says the local chronicler, owing to the modern decline in Christian morality. Saint Bernardine used to preach the placing of the monogram over the doors of people's houses, and the examples of this pious practice are numerous in Camajore. There is a fine artistic specimen over the entrance-gate to the town.

Here is a liturgical curiosity which is likely to have considerable interest for the liturgical student, and I trust that, for his sake, the general reader will forgive its introduction here. Saint Bernardine himself commanded that the Holy Name should be celebrated in Camajore every June 1. This was religiously carried out by the Commune, and in 1528, a bad year of plague elsewhere, another year of immunity at Camajore, it was decreed that the feast should be celebrated with yet greater solemnity. In 1660 the feast was raised to the rank of a holiday of obligation. The Captains and Councillors, I should have said, always took part in the great procession of that day. This continued down to 1860, and if the modern Councillors no longer walk in the procession they cheerfully vote a small subsidy and lend the town band. The now popular feast of the Holy Name was not introduced into the Church Universal until 1721, when Innocent XIII. decreed that it should be celebrated on the second Sunday after the Epiphany. Pious little Camajore had therefore anticipated the Church Universal by

about 300 years. But there is more than this. In 1787, finding that they were now celebrating the Feast of the Holy Name twice in the year, the Chapter of the Collegiate Church interpellated the Congregation of Rites as to whether they were in order in so doing, and the Congregation replied that they might continue to do so without any scruple. Therefore Camajore is, I suppose, the only place in the wide world where the Holy Name is celebrated twice in the year. This is my liturgical curiosity, and I know of no other quite like it.

The whole of the Versilia is a vast olive orchard. As likely as not, the olive oil which you have used in London—provided you have had the good fortune to get it pure—has come from the Commune of Camajore. Drive up from Viareggio one day, up and up to Corsanico, and down again to Camajore: it is one succession of fruitful olive orchards. Laughter and song come from the women-workers there, who, when wages are low, are getting but fourpence a day without bite or sup. The olive-tree seems to me the most interesting, because the most historical, of all trees. Holy Writ teems with references to the olive and its oil. It is in Holy Writ one of the symbols of man's well-being, and with wine, and milk, and honey, makes up the fatness of the land. With the Greeks the crown of wild olive was the noblest of all crowns; with the Romans an olive-branch was the symbol of peace; the Egyptians accorded it a religious veneration. Athena and Poseidon contending for the possession of Athens, the gods decreed that it should be given

to whichever produced the gift most useful to man. Poseidon produced a horse; Athena the olive; and Athens was given to Athena. The history of no other tree, I think, would make quite so interesting and picturesque a volume; and if this does not immediately strike the English imagination, it is because our eyes are not accustomed, as with the people of the sunny South, to the daily sight of the olive-tree, our palates are not accustomed, as theirs, to the daily consumption of its fragrant oil. The traveller's first delight on coming to Italy is the sight of the hoary grey-green olive orchards climbing in terrace upon terrace up the slopes of Central and Southern Italy, but the traveller needs to become a dweller in this enchanted land before he can appreciate all the uses and advantages of pure olive-oil.

The olive-oil industry is one of the most flourishing in Italy. And just as the finest oil in the world comes from Italy, so the finest oil of Italy comes from Tuscany. The whole of the Lucchesato is a great centre of the industry; indeed, as you take your walks and drives abroad in this verdant corner of the garden of Italy, the country often seems like one continuous olive orchard. Only think of it; in a good year the olive groves of Tuscany will yield as much as 7,000,000 gallons of pure olive-oil. My ideal traveller knows more about the industries than the museums of the country in which he is travelling; he knows full well that an inspection of the ancient industries of an old country will bring him de-

lightful excursions and delightful experiences. But he should know something about these industries first, and at the risk of wearying his less-adventurous brother—the dreamer in churches and picture-galleries—I will jot down for him some useful knowledge notes about the olive-tree and its oil.

The olive-tree thrives in exposed places of a certain altitude, and in a poor rocky soil. At all events it is the trees so situated that yield the finest oil. The trees planted in the richer soil of the sheltered plains are more luxuriant, but produce inferior fruit. A climate, warm in the summer and moderately cold in the winter, is best suited to the olive. A dry cold destroys parasites and the fruit's worst enemy, the *musca oleæ*, or olive-fly, which in a mild December will ruin a whole season's harvest by its ravages. On the other hand, a too severe winter is equally the olive's enemy; for instance, a hard frost, following upon rain or snow, renders the fruit unfit for the production of normally fine olive-oil. The olive-tree is an evergreen; it usually blossoms in April; the berries begin to ripen in October, changing from green to purple-black. The first fruit may be looked for in December, and the harvest will last until May, for the berries of a tree do not ripen simultaneously. The fruit when ripe drops from the tree of itself, and is gathered day by day as it falls. This is the best method of collecting the fruit, but the trees are also shaken, and in some places stripped like other fruit trees.

The fruit of the olive-tree will not keep; if it is to be pressed for its oil it must be dealt with immediately. More especially if the olives should be left lying any time upon the damp ground will the oil pressed from them be inferior in quality and unpleasant to the taste. And so on, and so on. With small talk like this at his fingers' ends, my enterprising traveller will have a memorable time with these dear peasants whose language is as pure and classic as their oil.

To continue then. As Canaan was described as a land flowing with milk and honey, so Tuscany, in a more literal sense, is a land flowing with oil. The manner of getting at the oil is something as follows: The berries, after careful selection and sorting, are placed in a large circular stone trough, in which revolves a huge granite millstone, turned by one of the big, patient, white oxen of Tuscany, and are thus crushed, stones and all, into a mass of pulp or paste. The pulp is placed in open-worked flat bags of a fibre made from rushes, and these bags are then piled one on top of the other to the number of eight or nine under a wooden press, which, as a rule, is worked by hand. Rivulets—real flowing rivulets—of oil at once begin to pour from the press into the tanks made for its reception. No process could be more simple or primitive, and such machinery as is used has probably not changed since the days of Virgil. The oil obtained by the first pressing is the famous "virgin oil," the finest and best which may be found. This is the oil which should be

used at table, which takes the place in Spanish and Italian cookery of milk and butter. This is the oil which is given as nutriment to weakly Italian children, and, who knows, if in its purest forms, it might not work wonders in our sickly children at home? At all events, my traveller will find himself regarded as a wiseacre of weight if he talk in this strain to the kindly peasant producers in the heart of Tuscany.

The olive is the most generous of berries. The first pressure has not exhausted all it will yield. The pulp is once more crushed in the mill, and again placed in the fibre-bags and put under the press. With the assistance of tepid water it produces an inferior grade, used as common table oil. Show your recondite knowledge by telling the *contadino* that he has not yet done with this wonderfully fruitful mass, and he will smile approvingly. For the crushed olive-stones can now be separated from the pulp; when dried these stones make excellent fuel, while the *débris* of the fruit, if once more put under the press, will yield an oil, no longer fit for human consumption, it is true, but which may be used for manufacturing purposes, and more especially in the making of soap. The virgin oil resulting from the first pressure is not immediately ready for use; it is full of minute particles of the berry, and needs to be carefully strained through masses of clean carded cotton-wool. The oil comes from the country districts in large casks to the merchants' deposits, say in Leghorn, and is there filtered and placed in cool

marble-lined tanks, awaiting shipment to Crosse and Blackwell or the widow Lazenby. From all accounts a great deal of inferior and adulterated oil is sold in England (here the *contadino* will properly commiserate with you), and one of the reasons would appear to be (but that you will keep to yourself) that few Englishmen know the difference between fine oil and poor oil, and are therefore easily imposed upon. An Italian gentleman, when he leaves his country for a holiday, will often cease altogether to eat salad, so repugnant seems to him the oil with which it is compounded. He has all the sensitiveness of palate to an oil that a taster in Mincing Lane has to tea. Still, it is by no means difficult to obtain the purest and finest oil even in London, if you know where to go and what to ask for. The best houses do not import their oil ready bottled, and bearing the label of a foreign merchant; they import in casks from Leghorn merchants of known standing, do their own bottling at home, and use their own labels. With all this wealth of useful knowledge, I can promise the inquiring traveller an interesting day in the olive orchards of Tuscany, and with directions so plain as these, he will have no difficulty, when he gets home, in finding a bottle of genuine virgin olive-oil, and its regular use, I dare avouch, will soon convince him of its marvellous health-giving and nutritious properties.

CHAPTER X

PISA

PISA, besides being one of the most interesting cities, is quite one of the most delightful residences in Italy. We have overlooked the fact, but our grandfathers knew it well enough. The thing I like best in Shelley is his love of Pisa: "our roots," he says, "never struck so deeply as at Pisa."* And here he wrote "Adonais." "Chance cast us, strangely enough," says Mary Shelley, "on this quiet, half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley; its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. . . . We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards." † Byron, too, liked Pisa, if in a less degree. Five years later, another poet, a greater poet even than Shelley, Giacomo Leopardi, came to seek health from the balmy, nerve-restoring air of Pisa. Do I exaggerate his poetic worth? If so, it may be because of the exceeding great relief of his exquisite limpid light prose, a very oasis among the ponderous phrasing of his contempo-

* Dowden's "Life of Shelley," vol. ii. p. 433.

† Mrs. Shelley's edition of the "Works," vol. iv. p. 54.

raries. At times it seems to me that there is no prose in all the great range of the Tuscan classics like unto the light and easy language of the "Epistolario." The Tuscan tongue, in the garb of written prose, has a natural propensity to heaviness; in the hands of the mediocre, of the pompously disposed, it becomes a stupendous instrument of torture; the higher the stilts the better the style. It needs real genius, a lofty aim, an heroic defiance of pedants and canons, and much recondite manipulation in the recesses of mind and spirit, to impart to the Tuscan narrative style something of the simplicity of Low Latin, the directness of French, the thrilling *verve* of Spanish, the unction of German, and above all the sheer enchanting music of English at its best. But all this is something of a digression, for which I humbly ask pardon.

Leopardi arrived at Pisa on November 11, 1827, and took up his residence in the Via Fagiuoli, leading out of the Piazza dei Cavalieri. A marble tablet records the event. "I was," he writes, "enchanted with Pisa for its climate, more than content with, nay, enamoured, of its air and its sky. I left Florence one degree above freezing-point; and here I found it so hot that I had to throw aside my overcoat and dress more lightly. Then the aspect of Pisa pleased me infinitely more than Florence; the Lung'Arno is so beautiful, so spacious, so magnificent, so bright, so smiling, that one must needs fall in love with it. I have seen nothing of the kind at Florence or Milan, or

Rome, and I doubt if in all Europe there can be any sight like it. . . . It is a delight to walk there in the winter, because the air is nearly always springlike; so that at certain hours of the day the place is full of people, full of carriages and pedestrians: you will hear ten or twenty languages spoken. . . . For the rest, Pisa is a combination of the large city and the small, of town and country, both in things and people, and a combination so romantic that I have never seen the like before. And to all its other beauties add the Tuscan tongue." *

In the balmy air of Pisa Leopardi's spirits revived. After two years of arid silence he here suddenly began to sing again with all the freshness of his early muse:

"Chi dalle grave, immemore
Quiete or mi ridesta?
Che virtù nuova è questa,
Questa che sento in me?
Moti soavi, immagini,
Palpiti, error beato,
Per sempre a voi negato
Questo mio cor non è?"

RISORGIMENTO.

Here, too, returned the memory of a boyish love of his for a girl of the people to whom (I think) he had never spoken, and he wrote the canto "A Silvia," a love poem, without a compeer of its kind.

To quote from another writer of distinction on the grateful subject of Pisa, Leigh Hunt's de-

* Giuseppe Piergili. "Vita di Giacomo Leopardi scritta da esso," Florence, 1899, p. 196.

scription in his "Autobiography" (chap. xix.) is well known and altogether admirable. "Let the reader imagine," he begins, "a small white city, with a tower leaning at one end of it, trees on either side, and blue mountains for the background. . . . Add to this, in summer time, fields of corn on all sides, bordered with hedgerow trees, and the festoons of vines, of which he has so often read, hanging from tree to tree; and he may judge of the impression made upon an admirer of Italy, who is in Tuscany for the first time." Leigh Hunt had eyes and could see; his words serve almost exactly to describe the sketch accompanying this chapter, and are a sure testimony to its insight and fidelity.

There is not a discordant note in the great book of praise which is slowly being filled up during the ages to the honour and glory of Pisa (I do not count the churlish Alfieri who, like any cockney, complained of Nature's beneficent gift, rain). "The city of Pisa is as much worth seeing as any in Italy," said John Evelyn in his day,* and it is as true in our day as it was in his. Whether it be thrilling history one wants, or fine pictures, or noble buildings, there is no place where all these things can be so well studied within the same convenient compass as at Pisa. But our sketch is only concerned with that illustrious group of buildings of which I have elsewhere said that it comprises one of the world's seven wonders and

* "Diary," October 19, 1644.

PISA FROM OUTSIDE THE WALLS

"A SMALL city, with a tower leaning at one end of it, trees on either side, and blue mountains for the background. . . . Add to this, in summer time, fields of corn on all sides, bordered with hedgerow trees, and the festoons of vines, hanging from tree to tree."—*Leigh Hunt.*

Plate 35

Pisa HH 83.

three of its greatest marvels.* In the forefront of the picture stands San Giovanni, the bapistery; immediately behind it the Duomo; and to the right of this again the Campanile or Leaning Tower; the famous Campo Santo is not visible from this point of view. The embattled city wall which you see in front of all was the design of Bonanno, the architect of the Leaning Tower, and was begun in the year 1155.

Our sensations on first beholding the Leaning Tower are peculiar. It leans to an alarming degree, and seen afar off (as in this picture) it has the appearance of leaning still more. "As perfectly awry as I expected," is Beckford's comment; † and "built exceedingly declining," quaintly says John Evelyn. Its exceeding decliningness has done much to stop people's eyes to its exceeding loveliness. Leigh Hunt has well said, "I know not whether my first sensation at the sight of the Leaning Tower was admiration of its extreme beauty or astonishment at its posture." And if so cultivated a judge could thus hesitate, is it any wonder that the prevailing attitude is rather one of open-mouthed astonishment at its awryness than anything else. The posture of the belfry, due, as I think, to an unhappy accident, has been its great misfortune. It is really a thing of exquisite beauty; its loveliness increases; it never palls on our senses; and yet it is almost impossible that the modern traveller (whose coach will not tarry

* "In Tuscany," p. 161.
† "Italy," Letter xiii.

his pleasure) should in his between train and train visit to Pisa have time to get the posture out of his mind, and dwell in satisfaction on its beauty alone. This beauty, I grant, is extremely evasive; it fades utterly from a photograph; it is grotesque in alabaster; even in many an engraving it rather seems to suggest trigonometrical problems for the geometrician, than thoughts of beauty for the poet or æsthete. I write to illustrate and not to praise these pictures, but I cannot refrain from pointing out that the artist has here most perfectly seized upon, and realised, the surpassing beauty of the Tower, even to the point, as it should be, of making us in the end admire its beauty rather than marvel at its eerie posture.

The foundations of the Leaning Tower were laid in 1174, to be precise on the eve of the Feast of Saint Laurence (August 9). The architects were two in number, Bonanno Pisano, who designed the original bronze doors of the Duomo, and Guglielmo da Oniponte, who will be better known to English readers as William of Innspruck. It is built entirely of white marble, tinged now with the yellow of age, but white in the sunlight and white from a distance. Two hundred and seven are the marble columns which run round its eight storeys, and two hundred and ninety the marble steps which lead to its sunlit summit. Here dwell the spirits of seven solemn bells, all tuned to a most religious harmony. I do not remember to have seen the names of these bells given in any English book. First in importance is the pon-

derous *Assunta*, founded in 1655, and weighing nearly three and a half tons. Close by her is the *Crocifisso*, refounded in 1818, and weighing more than two tons. The third bell is called after *San Ranieri*, patron of the city. The fourth bell has a history. Once called *La Giustizia*, but now *La Pasquareccia*, it hung in the old Torre del Giudice, and tolled for the deaths of malefactors and traitors. It is the most ancient of the bells in the Tower (1262), and owes its place there to the beauty of its voice. It is stamped in relief with a beautiful Annunciation, and for a long time was put to the better use of ringing the Angelus; that office has now fallen to the *Crocifisso*. The fifth bell is the *Del Pozzo*, called after a famous archbishop of that name. The sixth bell is the *Terza*, so called perhaps because it may have summoned the canons to Tierce; and the seventh is the *Vespruccio*, or Vesper bell. The Tower is one hundred and seventy-nine feet high, and is fourteen feet out of the perpendicular. Loud and long have been the disputes as to whether it was so built, or whether its position comes from a slipping of the foundations. Alessandro da Morrona is strongly for the latter opinion,* and Ranieri Grassi, with a wealth of argument, as strongly on the other side.† The simple fact is that we are without contemporary documents on the subject, and in the absence of such documents a positive conclusion is impossible.

Still, if common sense be allowed a say in the

* "Pisa Illustrata," Pisa, 1787–1793, 3 vols.

† "Descrizione Storica e Artistica di Pisa," 1837–1838, 3 vols.

matter, all would surely point to an unlooked-for (and most unwelcome) shifting of the foundations. The aim of all early Italian art was simple and direct; it nowhere reveals a crooked notion; of its very nature it abhors a freak. And it is instinct with the sense of beauty and proportion. The crooked freakish posture of the Tower is against all sense of balance and proportion, and jars upon the sense of beauty. True a Tyrolese had a hand in the building of it, and there is a deficient sense of beauty and proportion in the Tyrolese mind: to this day that people will publicly drive you with one horse hitched alongside the pole of a two-horse shay, the most lopsided of arrangements. But if William of Innspruck had suggested the building of a crooked tower, it is not easy to imagine that his Pisan *confrère* would have had any hand in it, and still less easy to suppose that the fathers of the Republic would have consented to it. And so, though admitting the want of documentary evidence, it is not unsafe to range ourselves on the side of those who believe in an early sliding of the foundations, while we must at the same time acknowledge with Mr. Evelyn, the "rare address of the architect" who outwitted Mother Nature, and saved for us in a declining posture, a tower which without him would have been abandoned incomplete or have speedily fallen into hopeless ruins.

But the Baptistery of San Giovanni is perhaps the most perfect of all the gems of Pisa. The

foundations were laid in 1152, and the architect was Diotisalvi. When the second storey was completed the Pisan exchequer gave out, but the proud citizens, to the number of 34,000 taxable families, voluntarily taxed themselves a gold sequin (over eleven livres) for each family, and the number gives one some idea of the great population of Pisa in the twelfth century.* The lower storey, with its score of columns, had been raised, as by a marvel, in fifteen days, and the Pisans would not let such a trifle as money—they the least sordid of peoples—stand in the way of this cherished design. In the middle of the Baptistery stands the majestic octagonal font, built for baptism by immersion. Every Pisan, since the year 1157, has been baptized in San Giovanni, there being no other church in the city where baptism is permitted. Another treasure of the baptistery is Niccola's pulpit, familiar to Londoners in the excellent model at South Kensington. Yet another treasure is the mystically beautiful echo in its marble recesses which will discourse the sweetest music at the bidding of the roughest voice.

But who could ever rightly sing the praises of the marble Duomo of Pisa! No place of equal splendour is quite so devout: that is my humble judgment, and if I am right it follows that no place ever so perfectly attained the end for which it was made —the public worship of God. That is its highest

* The present population is about 22,000.

praise. I call it the most beautiful interior in Tuscany, perhaps in Italy. It is a defect in guide-book and other accounts of Italian cathedrals, that they so often omit the dedication, why I cannot fathom. The Pisa Duomo, then,—to avoid a like solecism—is dedicated to Maria Assunta, our Lady of the Assumption. That is why the big bell in the Campanile is called the *Assunta*. That is why, on the evening of every August 14, the Eve of the Assumption, the interior of the cathedral used to be profusely illuminated with the most beautiful of all fires, the flame of the wax candle. "One evening, in August," says Hunt, "I saw the whole inside of the cathedral lit up with wax in honour of the Assumption."* *One* evening! Sympathetic as Hunt is, deeply appreciating the ceremony which drew from him some beautiful reflections beautifully put, how widely he must have been separated from the people he was so lovingly studying, if he could speak of *the* evening as *one* evening!

The marble Duomo of Pisa was raised by the fighting Republic as a monument of gratitude to the Lord of Hosts. In 1062 the Pisans gained at Palermo a great battle over the Saracens—scourge and terror of the Christian Commonwealth—bursting the chains across the harbour, and carrying off in the end booty of untold value, worked gold, silks, spices, aromatics, and a great store of all the rich and precious products of Egypt and the

* "Autobiography," chap. xix.

Indies. This wealth was put to no base uses, but by the general consent was dedicated to building a temple that should be as worthy of the majesty of God as the hand of man could make it. The foundation-stone of it was laid—"totâ adstante* civitate"—on March 25, 1063 (Pisan style 1064), which was also New Year's Day in the Republic. The architect was Buschetto. Vasari (an Aretine) calls him a Greek.† It is not safe to say so before a Pisan, and moreover it is not true. The cathedral was built on the site of the old church of Santa Reparata, where once the palace of Hadrian had stood. It is built on the most elevated part of the city, and the position, no doubt, was chosen to prevent all possibility of inundations from the treacherous Arno. The Cathedral was finished in 1092. The Emperor Henry IV. and the great Countess Matilda endowed it richly, and Urban II., in tribute, as it were, to so noble a building, raised Pisa from a Bishopric to an Archbishopric, placing

* The Pisans, almost alone in Tuscany, logically reckoned from the Incarnation itself. Most other places adopted the Florentine style of reckoning from a year *after* the Incarnation. The Pisans, therefore, are nine months and seven days ahead of our notation, the Florentines two months and twenty-five days behind us. There were a few places in Tuscany (*e.g.*, Arezzo, Pistoia, Cortona) which began the year *a Nativitate*. Outside Tuscany we have the Venetian style beginning the year on March 1, and the Byzantine in the South, beginning on September 1, *before* our January 1. As may be imagined, the business of giving a modern date to old Tuscan documents and inscriptions is attended by an abundance of pitfalls.

† "Proemio delle Vite."

Corsica and Sardinia under its ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The building is in the form of a Latin cross with a double aisle each side of the nave, and an aisle on each side of the transepts. Beckford, with the narrow views of eighteenth-century England in such a matter, expresses "no small surprise" at finding Pagan sarcophagi in the Pisan Campo Santo. "I could not have supposed," he says, "the Pisanese sufficiently tolerant to admit profane sculptures within such consecrated precincts."* I suppose he did not know that the very Duomo was full of Pagan pillars. It is true that the twenty-four columns in the principal nave are of granite from Elba and the Island of Giglio, but the columns in the side aisles, partly granite and partly marble, are all Pagan, sanctified by consecration and association.

The Duomo was consecrated in 1118 by Pope Gelasius II., and tradition has it that it was on that occasion draped exteriorly with a marvellous red festoon, or rather band, glittering with precious stones, and intended to symbolise the girdle of the Virgin, with which the Assumption is so particularly associated. It is sad to think that this monster girdle disappeared centuries ago, having been appropriated by the Gambacorti for their considerable needs. It must have been worth quite £30,000 of our money, and the Republic, more than once, when raising a temporary loan,

* "Italy," Letter xiii.

PISA, TORRE GUELFA

SHELLEY took his inspiration for his "Tower of Famine" from the Torre Guelfa, which Medwin records, describing thus: "Follow the graceful curve of the palaces on the Lung 'Arno, till the arch is naved by the massy dungeon tower frowning in dark relief."

Plate 36

gave this great girdle as security. The Duomo was girt with it every Feast of the Assumption and on one or two other of the great feasts. It was one of the chief wonders of Italy, and people came from all parts to see it. There used to be a fresco by Pietro Sorri of Siena, done in the year 1618, in one of the tribunes, representing very beautifully the consecration, and showing the girdle running right round the Duomo. This fresco, by a deplorable piece of vandalism, was destroyed during some alterations made at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A small and neatly done water-colour copy of it has, however, been kept, and may be seen by the curious in the "Opera" of the Duomo. The little picture is brought into the Cathedral and affixed to one of the pillars every Feast of the Dedication. The "Opera," too, had faithfully preserved a strip of the girdle about nine feet long, which is now to be seen in the wonderful local museum (Museo Civico). It is a curious and most interesting bit of work, though assuredly of a later date than 1118. Supposing the whole girdle to have been made on the same plan—as it undoubtedly was —this is something like the pattern: every three feet or so, an enamel plaque with raised silver-gilt figures, each a gem of art; every eighteen inches, a small flat enamel design; every twelve inches, a silver Pisan cross; the whole semé of precious stones set in silver or silver-gilt. In the nine feet of the girdle which you may see in the museum there are five of the plaques: (1) Saint John the

Divine writing his Gospel; (2) Saint Peter and Saint Paul being led to execution; (3) figure of a woman (? Saint Mary Magdalene); (4) Saint Luke the Evangelist, also writing; (5) the Decollation of Saint Paul. And there are eighty-four precious stones in the three yards of this fabric! I know no fact in Pisan history that so vividly brings out the lofty magnificence of the Pisan mind as this monster girdle. Venice would have been content with a facsimile (perhaps bejewelled) of the original girdle; Florence, if she had had the imagination to think of such a thing, might perhaps have run the length of girding the cupola; but the magnificence of Pisa could be content with nothing less than the girding of her whole cathedral, and it took over six hundred yards of this costly fabric to accomplish the lofty purpose of her ancients and people.

One of the proudest boasts of the fighting Republic was its shipbuilding yard or arsenal. It lay at the extreme west end of the city, just by the Ponte a Mare. The arsenal was built in 1200, and was said to be roomy enough for the laying down of seventy galleys at a time. It was completely walled, and was defended by three towers. One of these towers still stands entire: the lofty, graceful, machicolated Torre Guelfa, which so finely closes the sweep of the Lung' Arno westwards. A good part of one of the other towers still remains, about a quarter of a mile to the north of the Torre Guelfa. This is the Torre di Sant' Agnese, or Torre Ghibellina; and as the two towers were unquestionably

connected by a wall, they help to give one some idea of the vastness of the arsenal. Note that this arsenal did not suffice for the needs of the Pisan Navy: there was another down on the seashore at the Porto Pisano, just to the north of the modern Leghorn. The beautiful old Ponte a Mare, on which Shelley wrote some famous lines,* was swept away by the terrific floods of 1869. A mean and particularly hideous iron bridge has taken its place.

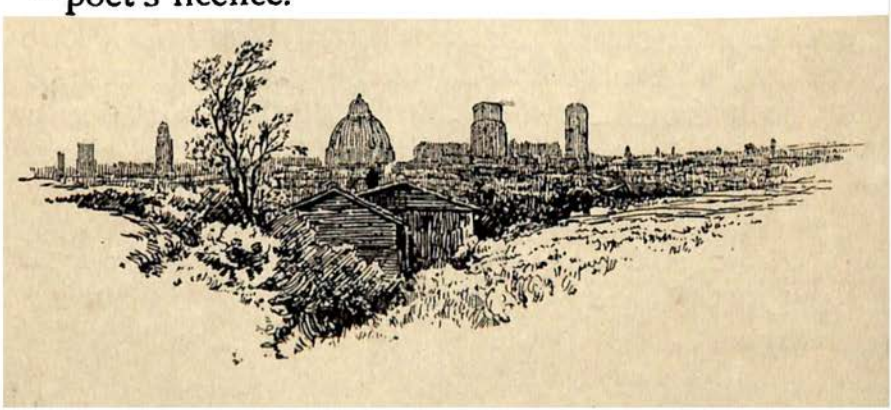
Shelley stoutly maintained against Byron that the sunset at Pisa was more beautiful than the sunset at Venice. "No sunsets are to be compared with those of Venice," said Byron. . . . "Ask Shelley." But Shelley replied: "Stand on the marble bridge, cast your eye, if you are not dazzled, on its river glowing as with fire, then follow the graceful curve of the palaces on the Lung' Arno till the arch is naved by the massy dungeon tower (erroneously called Ugolino's), frowning in dark relief, and tell me if anything can surpass a sunset at Pisa."† Shelley here speaks like a true poet—the poet of the few: the scenic effects of Venice are far greater, the scene at Pisa infinitely the finer. But it should be noted that the Torre Guelfa cannot be seen from the "marble bridge," the Ponte a Mezzo that is, owing to the curve of the river.

* "Evening: Ponte a Mare, Pisa."

† Medwin's "Conversations of Lord Byron," Paris, 1824, vol. i. p. 15. A sketch of Venice has been inserted in this chapter that the reader may be helped to recall his Venetian memories while reading of Pisa.

You must walk seawards as far as the Vicolo della Vigna before the Torre Guelfa leaps into sight.

Shelley in the above quotation is, of course, obviously referring to the Torre Guelfa. I have failed to find any local tradition that it was ever "erroneously called Ugolino's," as he says. The real Hunger Tower stood in the Piazza dei Cavalieri: all traces of it have long since disappeared, but a modern inscription marks the spot. Mrs. Shelley does not seem to have been as well informed as her husband, for in a note to his "Tower of Famine" (why "Famine," and not "Hunger?"—Torre della Fame) she writes: "At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of 'La Torre della Fame': in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated near the Ponte al (*sic*) Mare, on the Arno." But, if Medwin may be trusted, it is certain that Shelley deliberately took his inspiration for his "Tower of Famine" from the Torre Guelfa, which had nothing to do with it; a characteristic and thoroughly commendable use of the "poet's licence."



VENICE, SAN GIORGIO

"A BUILDING which owes its interesting effect chiefly to its isolated position, being seen over a great space of lagoon. The traveller should especially notice in its façade the manner in which the central Renaissance architects (of whose style this church is a renowned example) endeavoured to fit the laws they had established to the requirements of their age."—*Ruskin.*

Plate 37

S. GEORGIO VENICE M 1884.

CHAPTER XI

FLORENCE

We tear ourselves away from Pisa with difficulty, even though the glamour of Florence be at the other end of the journey. And even with the thought of this glamour full in our minds it is difficult not to descend at almost every intermediate station (we are travelling by slow train as is our wont). There is busy Navacchio, a rustic Manchester under an azure sky, full of the sound of cotton mills; here, as I like looking into industries, I can also see the works of the Tuscan Huntley and Palmer, Guelfi, author and maker of that joy the "Letizia," the most delicious biscuit in the world; here, too, the steam tram is waiting to take me out to the noble Charterhouse at Calci. Then there is Pontedera, the largest egg-market in Tuscany, where hundreds and thousands of eggs are collected and sent to Marseilles; and after twenty minutes ride the Imperial city of San Miniato al Tedesco, where there is much to see, though my chief interest is in the Observantin Retreat over at Fucecchio, founded by the Blessed Teofilo da Corte of Corsica so recently as 1736. Next comes the episcopal city of Empoli, and we

stop our ears so as not to hear the alluring invitation *Per Siena si cambia.* Passing through Montelupo with its potteries, Signa with its straw plaiting, and San Donnino, not far from which is the modern Franciscan printing press of Quaracchi, where I am sure of a warm welcome, we are soon in Firenze la Bella, glad now at having resisted the temptation to break our journey elsewhere.

I suppose that in all sober earnestness Florence is the most enchanting city, the most delectable abiding-place, in the whole Universe. Not that all of us are so framed as to desire to pitch our tents for ever in this Promised Land. But consider man in his length and breadth : take the average man, with his natural love of beauty, knowledge, pleasure, with his own good temper and fondness for good-tempered people, with his rather easy views of life : to such a one, to the great body of educated people that is, Florence must seem, as I have said, the most enchanting city in the Universe. Rome, of course, we leave out of consideration : Rome is emphatically a city of the other world : this world's pleasures and ambitions mix ill in its atmosphere, jar and grate there upon the senses and intellect. I would not call Florence entirely a city of this world either, but one thing is certain : this world's pleasures are very delightful there, while this world's ambitions, being in the main social, are merely harmlessly diverting. Florence, the bewitching siren that has turned the heads of so many, is all things to all men—that is one of the secrets of her success : she is cheap or dear,

smart or simple, a quiet retreat or a giddy rout, gloriously mediæval and shudderingly modern, democratic to the finger-tips and vauntingly aristocratic, deeply devout and airily oblivious of religion, a noble city of the arts, of libraries and learning, or if you will a city of such a round of dances and dinner-parties, of theatres and private theatricals, that you have no time to look at a picture, or open a book, or enter a public monument. In one thing only Florence is always the same—and this is her greatest witchery—in the broad, sunny, warm-hearted courtesy of all the Florentines high and low.

Firenze, or in its older and more beautiful form, Fiorenza, is said to be so called because she flourished exceedingly and was the Flower of all Italian graces. Surrounded by lovely hills, placed in the centre of a fertile territory, adorned without by monuments which for sheer beauty have no parallels, and within by a splendour and magnificence of art that have no compeer, Florence has been well named *la bella*. Take a peep at the city as seen from the Boboli gardens in this sketch: it is a blaze of beauty, entirely pleasing to the senses, while the history and meaning of it all is stimulating alike to intellect and feelings. On the right is the square tower of the Bargello and over against it the graceful spire of the Badia; next in order comes the crenellated Palazzo Vecchio with its heaven-kissing belfry: and then, majestically, but as if gathering the rest of the city under the shelter of her wings, the noble cathedral of Santa Maria

del Fiore, flanked by Giotto's Campanile; this side again of the Campanile, Orsanmichele, the only Florentine Church of moment without a belfry: on the extreme left of the picture, San Giovanni, the Baptistery, and in the distance the slender spire of Santa Maria Novella. And it is an extraordinary reflection that five of these monuments, the Bargello, the Badia, Orsanmichele, the Palazzo Vecchio and the Cathedral, were all designed by one and the same giant, Arnolfo di Lapo.

THE DUOMO

The Florence Cathedral took a great deal of building. Of the Cathedral, decreed by the Republic in 1294, the architect was Arnolfo, the son of Cambio of Colle Val d'Elsa. That is who he was, but having been erroneously styled Arnolfo the son of Lapo, that is what he is called. To describe him fully in Tuscan, he should be called Arnolfo di Cambio detto di Capo di Colle Val d'Elsa. The first stone of the Duomo was laid in 1296, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, by the Cardinal Legate, in the presence of the entire Florentine people. Santa Maria del Fiore is what the Duomo is *called*, perhaps after the Republic's fleur-de-lis; like the Cathedrals of Pisa and Siena, it is dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo, our Lady of the Assumption. Building went on in a very different fashion from the glorious *slancio* of Pisan patriotism and piety which, two

FLORENCE FROM THE BOBOLI GARDENS, LOOKING TOWARDS FIESOLE

"THE garden of Boboli lies behind the Grand Duke's palace, stretched out on the side of a mountain. I ascended terrace after terrace, robed by a thick underwood of bay and myrtle, and looked up to the cypress groves which spring above the thickets . . . a winding path led me to a green platform overlooking the whole extent of wood, with Florence deep beneath, and the tops of the hills which encircle it jagged with pines, and here and there a convent or villa whitening in the sun."—*Beckford's Letters.*

Plate 38

centuries earlier, raised up their Duomo in less than thirty years, and a good part of their Baptistery in fifteen days. Things might have gone otherwise if Arnolfo had lived longer, for he learnt his art from Niccolo Pisano, and had perhaps imbibed something of Pisan energy. Indeed, while he lived the building made good progress. But he died in 1310, and to him succeeded many architects, most of them world-famed: Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Andrea Orcagna, Filippo di Lorenzo, until we come to Filippo the son of Ser Brunellesco Lapi, known in history under the genitival form of his father's name as Brunelleschi. He came home from Rome in 1407, and being consulted counselled the building of that drum with the eight round windows which is the salvation and making of the cupola. It was not till 1420 that Brunelleschi's designs for a cupola were accepted, and another year elapsed before the work was put in hand.

Brunelleschi was a man of superlative genius. But for his strong will and fiery temper Florence would never have had her cupola. No building ever gave birth to so much talk and squabbling as Santa Maria del Fiore. Popular governments have not the courage, or the intuitive trust in genius, of magnificent princes. This big-souled genius, hampered by a high ideal and a hot temper, found the Signori Consoli and the Signori Operai very difficult to deal with. They thought him raving with his colossal projects; a Grand Duke would have understood, sympathised, given him a free hand,

and left him to himself. Then there were rivals buzzing about with every kind of proposal, inept some of them, daring all of them. I know not whether to call him inept or daring who suggested that so vast a cupola could only be built over a mound of earth, and that if this mound were but stuck with coins here and there, after the manner of a giant Twelfth Night cake, the people would cart it away fast enough without further expense to the Signoria. The proposal at least betrays a certain magnificence of mind, and one can imagine the wild Florentine fun and riot that would ensue upon the cutting of this Brobdingnagian cake. The vision of his cupola was as present to Brunelleschi's mind as it now is to our senses. On one occasion when he told them so, the glow of his temper, the flow of his language were such, that the Signori Consoli and the Signori Operai had him carried out bodily, kicking and struggling, from the audience-chamber by their men in livery; a Medici instead would have had him locked up—as in the case of Lippo Lippi—until he had finished his designs.

Brunelleschi was obliged to resort to ruses with these people so as to carry out his designs, and by scheming and striving he had his way, and we have his cupola and lanterna. The popular representatives, listening to the popular voice, could not let genius carry out its work alone, but must needs join to poor Filippo as controlling influence, another architect, Lorenzo Ghiberti, who, though he made the gates of Paradise, had no notion what-

ever how to build a heavenly vault. Yet Lorenzo's friends gave out that *he* was the genius who was doing everything. Meantime the real genius was eaten up with passion at this intolerable state of things, and his only hope of success was to be rid of his coadjutor. He resorted to ruse. Having first found out that Lorenzo had not the faintest idea how to carry out the work at the difficult point it had reached, Filippo clapped a poultice on his side, swathed himself in bandages, and went to bed, complaining of intolerable pains in the loins. Work immediately came to a standstill, and immense rivers of talk began to flow. Lorenzo pretended to be unwilling to proceed without Filippo ; he was, as a matter of fact, quite incapable of so doing. When the Operai came to pay their visit of condolence and inquiry, they lamented bitterly the deadlock in the work. "But you've got Lorenzo," Filippo said mischievously. "Yes, but he won't work without you." "I'd work fast enough without *him*," growled Filippo. From this answer the Operai divined that his real ailment was the inability to work yoked to a fine sculptor who was an inexperienced architect, and in 1423 the whole work was finally given into his hands. The actual cupola was finished in 1434, and then came more delay and disputes about the lantern, until Brunelleschi's design for this was also accepted. This was in 1436. Brunelleschi died in 1444, and the lantern was not finished until 1456, so that cupola and lantern between them took six years more in the building than the whole of the Pisa Duomo.

The façade led to even more bickerings than the building. The beginnings of Arnolfo's façade were pulled down by Giotto to make room for a design more in harmony with his own immortal bell tower. This was pulled down in 1588 by Bernardo Buontalenti, architect, who hoped, no doubt, to get the job of re-erecting it. More muddling, more tergiversations, more delay. Designs of Baccio del Bianco were approved in 1626, but being universally disliked were discontinued, till on the marriage of the Hereditary Prince Cosimo in 1661 a temporary painted canvas façade was erected and left there to be destroyed by the rain. In 1688 more tinkering: the walls were filled up with brick, smoothed, and frescoed by painters from Bologna. The first stone of the façade which we now see was laid in 1860. The architect was Emilio de Fabris, and it was completed in 1887. In the secular Opera of the Duomo you will see the models of *cinque* and *seicento* projects, and we have much to be thankful for that the work was left to discriminating modern hands. The passable bronze central door was only unveiled in 1903. Thus the Duomo, from its commencement in 1294 to 1903, the date of the bronze door, was six hundred years in building, as against the thirty years which the Pisans required to complete their entire and perfect chrysolite. Indeed, Santa Maria del Fiore is not yet finished. The rim of the drum is still undecorated. Baccio d'Agnolo's designs for a balcony to run round it were accepted, but only one-eighth of the work—still standing—was carried out. Baccio's

balcony would certainly have stunted the cupola and prejudiced that bold *sveltezza* which is its chief wonder and beauty. It is well that the work was discontinued. Once more the air is full of projects. What will the moderns do? Will they be as successful as they were with the façade? The Duomo is not altogether a sympathetic building. I have said of the Assunta of Pisa that no place ever so perfectly attained the end for which it was made —the public worship of God. Nobody could have the hardihood to say the same of Santa Maria del Fiore, whose beautiful proportions do not atone for its great, bare, chilly interior. It has one great merit, however—that of dwarfing man. But the great beauty of the Duomo is its exterior, and just as I have called the Pisa Duomo the most beautiful interior in Tuscany, perhaps in Italy, so Santa Maria del Fiore is the most beautiful exterior in Italy, perhaps in the world.

THE CAMPANILE

The Campanile is another monument of mighty genius. In 1334 the Republic determined that a tower, surpassing in height and magnificence the work of Greeks and Romans in their most flourishing epochs, should be built. It must be admitted that Giotto carried out the wishes of the magnificent people of Florence to the full. It is strange to me that Ruskin should have written of it "in the first appeal to the stranger's eye there is some-

thing unpleasing"; I think with most people it has been a case of love at first sight. Giotto's design, though, would have made the tower terminate in a spire: one cannot but rejoice that Taddeo Gaddi—who completed the work—abandoned this part of the design. The persistency and frequency with which the seven bells in the tower send out their call to clergy and laity remind us that the Duomo does not merely exist for the æsthetic satisfaction of these streaming masses of travellers from the four quarters of the globe. From nine to nine-thirty the bells go without ceasing; ecclesiastics enter the great building at all its seven doors, and disappear into one or the other sacristy according as to whether they are canons or chaplains; the seminarists arrive in procession. At nine-thirty Tierce begins; then follows the capitular sung Mass; then Sext. This is the time to realise the object for which the Duomo was built: incidentally, too, our admiration for Brunelleschi's genius increases. People complain that there is too much echo in the octagonal choir under the cupola. There is no echo, only a reverberation; the voices do not come back, they continue upwards. Brunelleschi has outstripped the designers of the Tower of Babel; he has built a marble conduit that leads straight into Heaven, up the long length of which praise and prayer infallibly fly to their destination. It is said that the Mass and Office are rapid and indistinct. Blame Brunelleschi. What can words do in the mouth of a channel that leads to Heaven but tumble over one another in hot haste to be at

such a destination? When, under Brunelleschi's dome, one hears the versicle

Deus in adjutorium meum intende,

and the answering responsory

Domine ad adjuvandum me festina,

soar upwards to their goal, who is there that will regret having spared half an hour from the glut of sights to enter a little more deeply into the meaning of this House of God.

THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

The Palazzo Vecchio, another of Arnolfo di Lapo's triumphs, was built by the Republic that her magistrates might be housed with dignity. Florence was at this time governed by a Gonfaloniere and eight Priors. These formed the Signoria or Government: hence the Palazzo della Signoria. The building, begun in 1298, rose with true Pisan vigour, for the palace itself was habitable by 1300. The tower, known as the Torre del Leone, is higher somewhat than Giotto's Campanile, but not nearly so high as Brunelleschi's cupola. With the Grand Dukes the Palace became ducal. The great Cosimo I. lived here until he moved his Court over to the Pitti Palace in 1551. The Palazzo della Signoria housed the modern Italian Parliament during the brief years that Florence was the capital of the new kingdom. It is now the Municipality or Town Hall of Florence, the finest municipal building in

the world. I do not at this moment remember any other palace of a Signoria or of reigning princes which is in actual use for civic purposes.

In the Sala dei Duecento the Syndic and the sixty modern Municipal Councillors of Florence hold their meetings. On the same floor is the Sala dei Cinquecento, decorated with monster paintings by that gorgeous barbarian Vasari, and his school. At the raised end is a statue of Pope Leo X. in the act of blessing; at the other end, recently erected, stands Savonarola in the attitude of menace. Surely they much misunderstand that holy friar, so admired of gentle Saint Philip Neri, who think that such an attitude best expresses his customary frame of mind. He was not a Florentine, but a Ferrarese: it is that, chiefly, I think, which gives him a certain angularity in the spreading canvas of Florentine history, that which accounts for the want of that serenity of outlook, those alluring graces, which charm us in holy Florentines like Saint Antoninus and Saint Philip Neri.

If none of the pictures in the Palazzo Vecchio is a masterpiece, all of them teach us much thrilling history. For instance, there is a picture by Ligozzi, representing Pope Pius V. crowning Cosimo I. Grand Duke. Here, indeed, is a text for an historical disquisition. What an illuminating volume this one subject would make if properly fortified with its *pièces justificatives* of Papal Bulls and Imperial Diplomas, public and private correspondence of Princes and Cardinals, ceremonial, ritual, proclamations, panegyrics, odes, and ex-

tracts from the weighty opinions of Aulic Councillors *de Jure Imperii in Florentiam*, and from the confident theses of theologians *quod Romanus Pontifex sit super gentes et Regna constitutus.* This is no place for an historical disquisition, but the briefest statement how Cosimo from "Duke" of Florence and Siena became Grand Duke of Tuscany may not be without interest to readers who have not had the opportunity of going deeply into so momentous a matter. And first I would protest against the necessity which we are under of using an opera bouffe title like *Grand* Duke. Our seventeenth-century ancestors knew better, and always correctly spoke of the "*Great* Duke of Tuscanie" (Magnus Dux Etruriæ).* It were affectation now, however, to attempt to eradicate an expression which has become as deep-rooted in our language and literature as Royal Standard where Royal Banner is meant.

Cosimo I., then, was made Grand Duke by Pope Pius V. in 1569. That is the easy way historians put this intricate point, passing lightly—nay, hastily—to more congenial and familiar matter. How could the Pope make Cosimo a Grand Duke? Was there any feudal connection between the Papacy and the States of Florence and Siena? Was not Cosimo a vassal of the Emperor and a vassal of Spain? If so, would it not be the overlords alone who could augment his title and dignities? These are questions which, I fear, we may

* "Rising early the next morning, we arrived at Poggio Imperiale, being a Palace of the Great Duke, &c."—John Evelyn.

not go into deeply now. I hold with those who consider that the Republic of Florence, if not a fief of the Empire, was then at least Imperial territory;* while nobody denies that Cosimo held the Republic of Siena from Spain as a *feudum ligium*. Cosimo's position was anomalous and peculiar. His predecessor, Alessandro de' Medici, first hereditary ruler of the Florentine Republic, was a Duke—Duke of Civita di Penna in the Abruzzi—at the time of his accession: hence, though correctly enough Duke Alexander, he has often erroneously enough been called First Duke of Florence. The Emperor Charles V. simply styled him in the diploma "caput," or chief, of the Florentine Republic. So Cosimo, his successor, was in 1537 elected head of the Republic by the Senate of Forty-eight, and it was not until the election received Imperial confirmation that he ventured to call himself "Duke" of Florence, though there was no verbal warrant for the title in the diploma. When he was invested with the Sienese State in 1557 he began to call himself "Dux Florentiae et Senarum"; but we must be careful not to be misled by this title. One cannot have a Duke, as we understand it, without a Duchy, and Florence and Siena were never Duchies. "Dux" here simply means head or chief, and the clearest definition of Cosimo's position for English readers is perhaps "hereditary *Doge* of the Republics of Florence and Siena."

* Leibnitz has profoundly said: "C'est un abus d'imaginer que ce qui n'est pas féodal est independant de l'Empire."

Without question Cosimo was one of the greatest rulers of his age; he had deserved much of his people, more still of Christendom; he had certainly deserved of the Emperor that the anomalies of his position should be removed, and that united Tuscany should be raised to its proper dignity among Italian States. Pope Pius IV. loyally endeavoured to remedy this matter by means of the Emperor. I cannot give particulars of the breakdown of these negotiations without going into much detail of statecraft. Suffice it to say that the Emperor having failed, the new Pope, Saint Pius V. took the matter into his own hands, and "de supremae nostrae Apostolicae potestatis plenitudine," created Cosimo hereditary Grand Duke of Tuscany.* Great rejoicings in Florence, amnesties, largesse, feastings, illuminations. The new Grand Duke released all prisoners for debt, of whom there were eighteen in the whole State, and—a characteristic touch of a magnificent mind—satisfied all these debtors' creditors in full. But the Emperor protested strongly against what he regarded as an usurpation of his rights; King Philip of Spain refused to recognise the new title; the King of France asked for time to study the Bull; most of the Italian Princes were up in arms; Protestant England, almost alone, cheerfully accepted from the very first a title conferred by that very Papal authority which a few months later was to declare Englishmen absolved from their allegiance to Elizabeth. Pius V. and Cosimo I.

* The Bull was dated August 27, 1569.

remained unmoved by the storm; the new Grand Duke betook himself to Rome in February of the next year (1570), and was there solemnly crowned by the Pope on *Laetare* Sunday, March 5. The crown was royal and of great beauty, something like an Eastern crown, but with the points curving outwards. These represent the blades of the Iris. In the centre of the crown is a large red fleur-de-lys florencée, so that the resplendent glory of the ancient Republic was, as it were, the central and chief jewel of this royal diadem. Around the circlet Saint Pius had engraved:

PIUS V PONT. MAX. OB EXIMIAM DILECTIONEM AC CATHOLICAE RELIGIONIS ZELUM PRAECIPUUMQUE JUSTITIÆ STUDIUM DONAVIT.

The sceptre was surmounted by the Florence fleur-de-lys on a Medicean *palla*. From an Illustrious Excellency Cosimo now became a Serene Highness. Not a single Ambassador would attend the function, a circumstance which only tended to heighten its Apostolic character and religious significance. The minutest details of this striking ceremony have come down to us in the diary kept by the Pontifical Master of Ceremonies, Cornelio Firmano. He even records portions of the liturgy used, and as these differ from the service for the Coronation of Kings in the *Pontificale* published two years later (Venice, 1572), I copy the beautiful *Accipe Coronam* and *Accipe Virgam*, so that the reader, too, may have some notion of the high ideal which the Church set before the Prince whom it was consecrating. Wearing his mitre and seated

Saint Pius placed the crown on the head of the kneeling Grand Duke, saying:

Accipe Coronam in signum amplioris praeeminentiae, quae per Nos capiti tuo imponitur. In nomine Patris ✠, et Filii ✠, et Spiritus Sancti ✠. Amen: et intelligas te amodo ad defensionem Fidei, Sacrosanctae Ecclesiae, viduarum, pupillorum, et quarumcumque aliarum miserabilium personarum, fore debitorem, velisque deinceps utilis esse exequutor, perspicuusque Dominator coram Domino, et inter gloriosos Athletas virtutum merito ornatus appareas, quam gratiam tibi concedere dignetur Dominus noster Jesus Christus, qui cum Patre, et Spiritu Sancto vivit, et regnat, etc.

Afterwards the Pope in like manner handed him the sceptre, saying:

Accipe virgam directionis et justitiae in nomine Patris ✠, et Filii ✠, et Spiritus Sancti ✠, Amen: per quam valeas unicuique secundum merita sua tribuere, sive boni fuerint, sive mali, semper Deum ante oculos habens, non declines a dextris, vel a sinistris, sed cum omni charitate bonis foveas, malos coerceas, ut omnes intelligant et sciant te justitiam delixisse, et odisse iniquitatem, quam gratiam tibi concedere dignetur qui est benedictus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Seven years later the Emperor Maximilian II. without any the slightest reference to the Papal Bull, issued a diploma creating Francesco I., Cosimo's son and successor, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Indeed he is cuttingly referred to as "Reipub. Florentiae et Senarum duce tertio." It would be tedious (I suppose) to detail the reasons which led the Emperor to confirm a dignity to which he had been so strongly opposed. It should be noted that the Bull of Pope Pius creates a Grand Duke of Tuscany, but does not erect Tuscany into a Grand

Duchy: it bestows a title, but in no way redistributes territory. The Republics of Florence and Siena, for all that is said, remain intact. Indeed clause 13 expressly states that the rights and jurisdiction of Emperor or King in Tuscany are in no way aimed at by the provisions of the Bull. The Emperor, however, is careful to erect Tuscany into a Grand Duchy, so that henceforth it was impossible to cavil any longer at the Grand Duke's title. With this act of the Emperor's the Republics of Florence and Siena disappear from history for ever, to be merged in the Grand Duchy which united the Tuscan people into a strong and prosperous state. The whole incident is most instructive as showing the immense power and influence of the Popes even at the end of the sixteenth century. It would be utterly erroneous to attribute to Pius V. any hostility to the Emperor in this act, much less any political ambition: his one object was to dignify a conspicuously Christian ruler: but it is another instance of the Pope taking the lead of the Emperor, and in its way another example of the oft-made pilgrimage to Canossa.

THE BARGELLO

The Bargello, formerly the palace of the Podestà of Florence, is another of Arnolfo di Lapo's great imprints on the city, and is evidence of the desire of the Florentines to lodge their executive officer magnificently. The system of Podestà was defi-

nitely introduced in 1207, to curb the tyranny and control the pride of those popular representatives, the Consoli. The Podestà was always to be a foreigner, but an Italian ; in other words, he could not be a Florentine. This had a double advantage: unpopular edicts were not carried out by a Florentine, and the foreigner went away and spread abroad the glories of Florence. The office of Podestà ceased with the beginning of the sixteenth century ; the executive centred in a prince who was a native and no foreigner; the fine palazzo was turned into a prison, and took and keeps its name from the Bargello, which being freely interpreted means chief of police. The palace has been admirably restored since the union of the kingdom, and is now a museum full of objects of priceless value.

THE BADIA

The Badia, *the* Abbey of Florence, is a favourite place with everybody. There is the greatest possible charm about the building, about its Benedictine decency and order, about everything, in fact, and especially everybody, connected with it. There is a story telling how Ugo, Marquis of Tuscany, founded seven abbeys, of which this was one, but it is quite certain that the Badia was founded by his mother, the Countess Willa, in 978. Tradition, as a rule, when it errs, errs on the side of a too great antiquity; here is an instance to the contrary. But then Ugo was a very imposing cha-

racter, and no doubt a great benefactor of the abbey, and so his personality has overshadowed that of the real foundress. The Badia, like the Duomo, is dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta. It is described as the Badia di Santa Maria, but in Tuscany Santa Maria, without qualification, always means Santa Maria Assunta. From the earliest days the devotion to the Assumption has been most marked, and that is all the more interesting because the Assumption—a holiday of obligation with the Church—is the last of the great unwritten Catholic dogmas, the only one, that is, which has not yet been added to the Creed.

By the way, there is another Santa Maria Assunta in this very street, the Via del Proconsolo. That is what it is, but it is *called* Santa Maria in Campo ("speciosa in campis"). The Church and the building adjoining it, No. 16, are assigned to the Bishop of Fiesole, and are therefore in the diocese of Fiesole. Until quite recently all the people living at No. 16—it is let out in flats—had to attend mass on the feast of San Romolo, because that is a holiday of obligation in the diocese of Fiesole, though not in the archidiocese of Florence. (There is something like this in London: Ely Place, Holborn, is in Cambridgeshire, so I suppose an offence committed there would have to be tried at the Cambridge Assizes.)

But to return to the Badia, from which I have wandered far. Arnolfo di Lapo rebuilt the Abbey and Church in 1285, but almost the whole of it was pulled down and built again in 1625. Here is

the tomb of the great Margrave, the finest imaginable bit of work by Mino da Fiesole. It was erected at the expense of the monks, not of the Signoria. I know no man's face sculptured in marble to equal this. Ugo died in 1006 on the feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle, December 21, and every year without fail on that date a solemn requiem for the repose of his soul is celebrated in the Abbey Church. His helmet and breastplate are always laid upon the catafalque. In times past—down to 1859, I think —a young Florentine used, on this occasion, to deliver a panegyric on the great prince. I have heard frequenters of the *messes des paresseux* say that the requiem is no longer celebrated. That is not so, but since the city has ceased to care about it, it takes place quietly at seven in the morning, instead of with some pomp at eleven. Then, again, the ignorant say that the monks have allowed the panegyric to drop. That, too, is not the case; it was not they but the Florentines who were pledged to this pious office, and it is the laity alone who have allowed it to fall into desuetude.

The Abbey buildings have been turned into Communal schools and police-courts (Preture). There are but four monks left, and by an effort they manage to keep up office in choir. The Abbey Church is now a parish church; the abbot is the parish priest, appointed by the Government. He is assigned a small portion of the abbey as *Canonica* or parish priest's house, and here the rest of the monks live with him. But in the eyes of the church he is abbot and of no diocese, and the Archbishop

of Florence on his pastoral visitation claims no more than to visit the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament and the parish confessional.

It is often said that Boccaccio lectured on the "Divina Commedia" either in the Badia or in the church of Santo Stefano *ad portam ferream*. Neither statement is correct. The abbot of Santa Maria was a great personage, an *abbas nullius*, with a little diocese of eighteen parishes in his jurisdiction. One of these parishes was the little church of Santo Stefano, just outside the abbey walls, always a Benedictine parish, and always served by a Benedictine monk. It is now incorporated in the present abbey buildings. Turn to the right when you have crossed the outside entrance, go down the corridor but a few paces, and there on the site of the parish church of Santo Stefano is the chapel of the Pandolfini family, built by Benedetto da Rovezzano, which has kept the name of Santo Stefano. In the parish church on this site it was that Boccaccio delivered his conferences; it would be incorrect to say that this historical event took place in the Badia.

Talking of Dante—I have talked about him as little as possible—somebody has in the last few years taken to marking with marble tablets, bearing the quotation, those parts of Florence which Dante has spoken of in the "Divina Commedia." He happens to have referred to the arms of Ugo (Par. xvi. 117–129), which are extremely simple: gules, three pallets argent. Outside the Badia there is the usual tablet with the quotation, and also a

pretty representation of the arms to which Dante was referring. But the arms are there represented as argent, three pallets gules. It was only a very simple matter of copying without going very far to do so: there are three beautiful examples of the arms on Mino's tomb; there is a large representation over the sanctuary; another in the sacristy. How can such an error occur? Or, if it occur, how can it be allowed to remain there for two years and more? The arms have undergone the fate of the Republic's: red has become white, and white red: the pallets like the lily have been in Dante's words "fatto vermiglio" (Par. xvi. 154).

I have not mentioned Filippino Lippi's *Madonna and Saint Bernard* because all the world knows it, but I had nearly forgotten what is to me the most interesting sight in the Badia. Perhaps only the intruding traveller sees it, for the guide-books are silent on the subject. In an offshoot of the Sacristy, neatly framed and conveniently hung upon the walls, is a curious and highly interesting collection of small water-colour drawings depicting the habits of the Religious Orders at about the beginning of the seventeenth century. At all events, all the Clerks Regular are there, and the Friars Minor Conventual are still in grey. What a book these drawings would make with just a little explanatory accompanying text! I confess that I have spent more time in this modest unknown little gallery than in any one of the salas of the Pitti.

THE PONTE VECCHIO

Four bridges span the Arno at Florence: the Ponte Rubaconte, called Ponte alle Grazie (1236); the Ponte Vecchio; the Ponte Santa Trinita* (1251, often destroyed; the present noble structure being built by Ammanati in 1557); and the Ponte alla Carraia (1218, and solidly rebuilt 1333). Of these four bridges, the Ponte Vecchio is the favourite, because it is lined with shops. But in the striking picturesqueness of its form and outline, the grouping and variety of its buildings, the multiplicity of its weather-stained colouring, no less than in the motley groups of pedestrians who hurry, or saunter, chaffer, or gossip in this narrow defile, it is an unique bridge which knows no parallel in Europe. The Pisans had a contempt for a bridge with shops; being a fighting rather than a trading Republic, they had fortifications, not shops, on the piers of their Ponte a Mare. I confess, that, with the Pisans, I like the freedom of an unencumbered bridge. After a day of suffocating heat, how exquisite the air on a bridge at night time. Then

* Note if you wish to be very Florentine you must, when speaking of the Church, piazza, or bridge of this name, be incorrect and say Santa Trínita, and not pronounce correctly Santa Trinità. It is odd, but the most educated Florentine says it and writes it. At the same time if you were talking of the Holy Trinity, or of any other Church, piazza, or bridge of the same name in any other city, that same educated Florentine would shudder unless you said Santa Trinità.

FLORENCE, PONTE VECCHIO

"THE Bridge *par excellence; il ponte*, or *il passo d'Arno*, as Dante calls it. More than a mere bridge over a river, this Ponte Vecchio is a link in the chain binding Florence to the Eternal City. A Roman bridge stood here of old . . . and possibly lasted down to the great inundation of 1333. The present structure, erected by Taddeo Gaddi after 1360, with its exquisite framed pictures of the river and city in the centre, is one of the most characteristic bits of old Florence still remaining."—*Edmund Gardner.*

Plate 39

idling on a bridge at any time is among the most diverting and improving of occupations. It is permissible, too; while idling in a street is bad form. Lean against the parapet of the Ponte di Mezzo at Pisa for an hour or so: what a different, what a much more minute, impression of people one gets than by passing them in the street, or watching them from a *café* window. There is no amusement or instruction of this kind to be got out of the Ponte Vecchio, at least under normal circumstances. At night rows of gloomy shop-shutters, many of them of corrugated iron, line either side; by day no air, no view, no parapet to lean against, the deafening din of traffic, and a pavement so narrow and crowded that there is no possibility of idling upon it. In fact the Ponte Vecchio is a street where one must move on, rather than a bridge where it is even the gentleman's privilege to loaf. It is true that the bridge is open in the centre. Here one may get a view certainly, and air, and study people, though only for two seconds as they flit past the little piazza; but the circumstances are not normal; idling here is somehow unnatural, conspicuous, uncomfortable, and undignified, and for my own part I never dally on the Ponte Vecchio. Of course the old bridge is delightfully picturesque as seen from the quays on the Lung 'Arno. One would not wish a stone of it otherwise: think of Florence without the Ponte Vecchio and chaos is come again. If all the bridges were like this one—quaint streets thrown across a river—I might turn vandal and contemplate demo-

lition, but there are three other bridges where I can loll against a parapet, take the air, and study human nature, and so I trust and pray that the ugly threats of demolition that one hears of from time to time are only idle talk.

There is not much to say about the history of the Ponte Vecchio. It is so much there as a matter of course, so intimate a feature of Florentine life, that one does not think of it as having a history. There was a bridge here, or near here, when Florence was a Roman colony; it is quite certain that there was a bridge on this actual spot in 1177. It first came to be called Ponte Vecchio when the Ponte alla Carraia was built in 1218. An inscription on the bridge tells us that it was destroyed by floods in 1333, and rebuilt in 1345. The floods of 1333 were terrific, carrying away the whole of the bridge except two piers, the entire Ponte Santa Trinita, the greater part of the Ponte alla Carraia, and seriously damaging the Ponte alle Grazie. The present massive structure was built by Taddeo Gaddi, perhaps from designs of Giotto. It cost the Republic 60,000 golden florins. Forty-four shops were built on the bridge; these were the property of the State and brought in a handsome rent. The shops are now exclusively occupied by jewellers. That was not so at first—butchers predominated; but there were also pizzicagnoli, shoemakers, blacksmiths, every kind of trade in fact. The place having become unsavoury, an ordinance of 1591 gave all these trades notice to quit, and an ordinance of 1593 gave the jewellers and silversmiths scattered

about the town (but chiefly inhabiting the Via del Moro and the Via dei Servi) notice to occupy the shops on the Ponte Vecchio, as they have done ever since. The incomparable Magliabechi began life in one of these silversmiths' shops. There is a modern bust to Benvenuto Cellini, prince of silversmiths, in the little piazza on the west side of the bridge.

Over the east side of the bridge runs the famous corridor which brings the Uffizi, nay the Signoria, into direct communication with the distant Pitti palace. One can take a covered walk here of about a kilomètre. It is this brown stone structure with its three arches in the centre that gives its chief beauty and dignity to the Ponte Vecchio. Vasari was the architect, and in his life by himself he says he built it in five months, adding truly enough that one might think that the work would rather have taken five years. The idea was Cosimo's; the object, according to Lastri,* the hope of surprise visits from his grandchildren yet unborn. The corridor was built in 1564, the year of the marriage of the hereditary prince Francesco with the Archduchess Joanna. That class of person who can see no good in any Medici thinks the corridor must have been built for some sinister purpose, a means of escape perhaps from an oppressed people struggling to be free. The plain truth is that Cosimo was a man of imagination, that he knew his Æneid, and conceived the harmless ambition of emulating Priam.

* "L'Osservatore Fiorentino sugli Edifizj della sua Patria," vol. vi. p. 35.

Limen erat caecaeque fores et pervius usus
Tectorum inter se Priami, postesque relicti
A tergo, infelix qua se, dum regna manebant,
Saepius Andromache ferre incomitata solebat
Ad soceros, et avo puerum Astyanacta trahebat.*
Lib. ii. 453.

Many of my readers will have taken the wonderful walk along this corridor. The limits of the Uffizi galleries terminate with the beginning of the Ponte Vecchio, where, having paid another franc at the turnstile, we enter upon our long covered seemingly endless walk. The corridor is lined on both sides with pictures, in the main portraits. Some of them are bad, but all of them profoundly interesting. There are also some thrilling pictures of popular festas. This is the place to learn history and to study heraldry, flags, crowns and costumes: but I usually see people racing along here, red book in hand and with such an odd fixed look on their faces, eager to get from one surfeit of masterpieces to another. (Do not believe Baedeker when he says: "Those who have left their sticks or umbrellas at the entrance to the Uffizi must, of course, return for them after visiting the Pitti Palace on the other side of the Arno." For the modest fee of 25c. you will find your stick waiting at the exit

* Or to give Dryden's rendering:
A postern-door, yet unobserved and free,
Join'd by the length of a blind gallery,
To the King's closet led, a way well known
To Hector's wife, while Priam held the throne;
Through which she brought Astyanax, unseen,
To cheer his grandsire and his grandsire's queen.

of the Pitti or the exit of the Uffizi, whichever you happen to want. The one gallery gives you a countermark to claim it from the other gallery, and the *facchino* carries it round through the streets. The corridor is closed on Sundays.)

THE MERCATO VECCHIO

The old market of Florence and its surroundings have disappeared as completely as if they had never existed. Its mere destruction is not matter for sentiment or outcry. It was a place of great and noble memories certainly, but scarcely of buildings which it was important at all costs to preserve. The old centre of Florence had to go, it and its slummy surroundings, it and its gruesome Ghetto, and though I cannot altogether sympathise with those who bemoan its disappearance, I can well understand the wrath of those who grieve at what has taken its place.

The Mercato Vecchio rose on the site of old Roman Florence. Here stood the Capitol, and the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. In the course of demolition precious remains of the Roman city were discovered buried under the sands and gravel of the overflowing Arno, marbles of the forum, mosaics of the baths, sepulchres, ducts, traces of streets and gates, all showing with a certainty that had not been possible before, that Florence had not been a small and insignificant, but a large and important, Roman city. These remains are now

in the Archæological Museum in the Via della Colonna, and have been arranged and illustrated by the Director, Professor Milani, in a manner which demands sincere applause.

In the days of the Lombard Kings the Piazza del Mercato was known as the *Forum Regis*, but as long ago as 1097 it was already called the *Forum Vetus*. In the middle of the twelfth century it was surrounded by the palaces of the leading citizens. Each palace had its tower. One of the old churches was so surrounded by towers as to be known as San Miniato *inter turres*.* Then each palace, too, had its loggia. The sight must have been superb. The open loggia took the place of the reception-room with the Florentine patrician. Here in the cool of the evening the family, its numerous branches, its trusty friends, assembled to make merry, to play games, to dance, to listen to the singing of songs and the playing of musical instruments. And all the while the *buon popolo* looked on without envy in their hearts, holding a loggia themselves if they had a mind in the piazza, and enjoying the music as much as any guest, for there were no walls between them and the assembly. Class distinctions in those days were more apparent than real, and there never was any barrier

* Built in 1046, destroyed in 1785. One of the thirty-six ancient parish churches of Florence. See Arnaldo Cocchi "Le Chiese di Firenze dal Secolo IV. al Secolo XX.," a systematic, scholarly and important study of the subject. Florence, 1903. Only one volume of the five, "Quartiere di San Giovanni," has as yet appeared.

more formidable between the classes and the masses than a salt cellar.

The piazza declined rapidly from its first mediæval splendour. Old families died out, or became impoverished, or were exiled. New families did not occupy the old houses. The market exercised the inevitable influence of depreciating property. The old palaces were let out in quarters, and went to pieces materially and morally. The market which before had only had movable benches, now began to set up fixed stalls, and the circle they formed was known by the pretty name of the *Corona di Mercato*. The Arte dei Beccai, or guild of butchers, set up a slaughter-house in the centre. Such old families as had remained began gradually and naturally to leave, and the buildings declined into filth and decay.

The Mercato and the Ghetto had to go; yet it is impossible not to deplore some of the things that went with them. Most of the buildings destroyed—and especially those of the Ghetto—were without archæological importance. They simply cumbered the ground, and had become the most convenient haunt and hiding-place of the cutpurse and vagabond of Florence. That popular writer, Signor Giulio Piccini (who still clings to his nom-de-guerre of Jarro) has taken us into the heart of these warrens, and unfolded their horrors with a *désinvolture* possible only in an Italian.* But many jewels were hidden in the mire, and though some had perforce to go, others might well have been

* "Firenze Sotteranea." Fourth edition. Florence. 1900.

saved. Signor Guido Carocci, the esteemed inspector of monuments and superintendent of excavations, known for the moderation of his views, is of the opinion that a small but most characteristic section of mediæval Florence might have been preserved as a priceless object-lesson to future generations. He would have taken the old Church of Sant' Andrea *in foro vetere* as a centre: round it would have been grouped the halls of the Arti dei Medici e Speziali, of the Rigattieri, of the Albergatori, of the Oliandoli; six or seven towers would have been saved, four or five palaces, and a few characteristic houses.* It is better perhaps that all should have gone than that all should have remained, but assuredly it is lamentable that the moderate proposal of Signor Carocci for the preservation of a small section should not have been carried out.

Of course fragments have been saved from the general destruction. In the Convent of Saint Mark, now the Museo di San Marco, are the pilasters and columns of *loggie*, the gates of the halls of Arti, coats of arms, brackets, architraves, capitals, cornices and so forth. But instead of being in the Convent of Saint Mark, what a fine thing it would have been, since they had to go into a museum, if in that small section of the old centre which Signor Carocci would have preserved, we could have had a Museum for the housing of all

* See his interesting books "Firenze Scomparsa," 1897, and "Il Mercato Vecchio di Firenze," 1884, from which I am freely copying, with compliments and thanks.

FLORENCE, THE MERCATO VECCHIO

(Now destroyed)

"A BROAD piazza, known to the elder Florentine writers as the Mercato Vecchio. This piazza, though the scene of a provision market from time immemorial, had not been shunned as a place of residence by Florentine wealth. In the early decades of the fifteenth century, the Medici and other powerful families had their houses there. . . . And high on a pillar in the centre of the place, a venerable pillar, fetched from the Church of San Giovanni, stood Donatello's stone statue of Plenty, with a fountain near it, where, says old Pucci, the good wives of the market freshened their utensils and their throats also."—*Romola*.

Plate 40

MERCATO VECCHIO FLORENCE

the relics of Central Florence. A Museum can justify its existence if it be intended, not for the reception of objects torn from their natural places and having a living use, but for the preservation of relics which would otherwise have infallibly been destroyed. Here then, on the very spot, in the sole surviving portion of the centre, we might have had conveniently collected for study, all the remaining relics of central Florence, whether mediæval or Roman.

It requires a little heroism, I grant, to say good-bye so cheerfully to the Mercato Vecchio; but, as a reward for such heroism, we had the right to expect that central Florence where stood the Capitol, the Temple of Jupiter, the palaces of the leading Florentine families, the halls of the principal Arti, should have been laid out in a manner as worthy of its stirring history and great traditions as modern art and ingenuity could make it. Instead of that we have a square. I will not called it hideous as many have done: that would be giving it too much character. It is a fatuous square, a vacant vapid square, a dull, heavy, stolid square, a square without any the least savour of Florence, a square that one would avoid as one avoids a bore at the club. In coming into this square from the religious piazza del Duomo, or the noble piazza della Signoria, or the patrician Lung' Arno, or the urbane and genteel Via Tornabuoni, or the jolly, bustling, brisk Via dei Calzaiuoli, it is as if one had been suddenly transported from the very ideal of a delectable city, to the capital of some barbaric

domain where only bourgeois have the right of vote and office. If it were not that the best beer in all Florence is to be had at one corner of it, and that the band plays here (who can resist an Italian band?) I would willingly join a league never to set foot again within its gaping precincts. It says of itself, this blatant square,

L'ANTICO CENTRO DELLA CITTA
DA SECOLARE SQUALLORE
A VITA NUOVA RESTITUITA
MDCCCXCV

A proud boast, but every time I read it when listening to the band, I derive a more and more certain conviction that the squalor of ages, if the greater evil, was unquestionably the lesser eyesore of the two.

PREACHING IN THE DUOMO

This sketch presents a sight curious to English eyes. It is the Lenten preacher, or *quaresimalista*, preaching in Santa Maria del Fiore. He never has the congregation of 20,000 people which the Duomo would hold, but even as it is, it is not easy to preach so that his whole audience can hear him, and a monster canvas (the *telone*, or *tendone*), 98 feet by 45, is therefore stretched across the nave, so that his voice may the better reach his hearers. From 1800 to 2000 people can stand under the *telone*, not a bad congregation. Note that the Duomo

of Florence has no pulpit. The pulpit you see in the sketch is a temporary wooden pulpit, used only during Lent, taken to pieces and stowed away in the Cathedral *arsenale* until next Lent comes round. When we read that Savonarola ascended the pulpit of Santa Maria del Fiore, it was a temporary wooden structure like this. Is there any special reason for this absence of a pulpit? I do not think so. Florentines say it would spoil the symmetry of the nave, but a noble pulpit can surely only add to the beauty of a church. Then I have heard it said that a cathedral ought not to have a pulpit because it constitutes in some sort a chair rivalling the Bishop's cathedra, and they cite the exemplar of all Cathedrals, Saint Peter's, which certainly has no pulpit. But there can be nothing in such an argument, for the preacher confessedly is only the Bishop's delegate. I suspect that these are only strained endeavours, far-fetched reasons, to hide another want of the Duomo.

Preaching in Italy is roughly of two kinds—preaching proper, called *predicazione maggiore*, and instruction. Ask an Italian at what time the sermon is in the parish church; and he will reply, "Oh, we seldom have sermons"; and I have known such a reply cause a scandalised foreigner to quote Milton, "The hungry sheep," &c. As a matter of fact, there is instruction (*spiegazione del Vangelo*), what we should call a sermon, at every parish mass in Italy. It is usually delivered from the altar steps after the Gospel by the parish priest in his chasuble, and consists of a lucid and lively explanation of

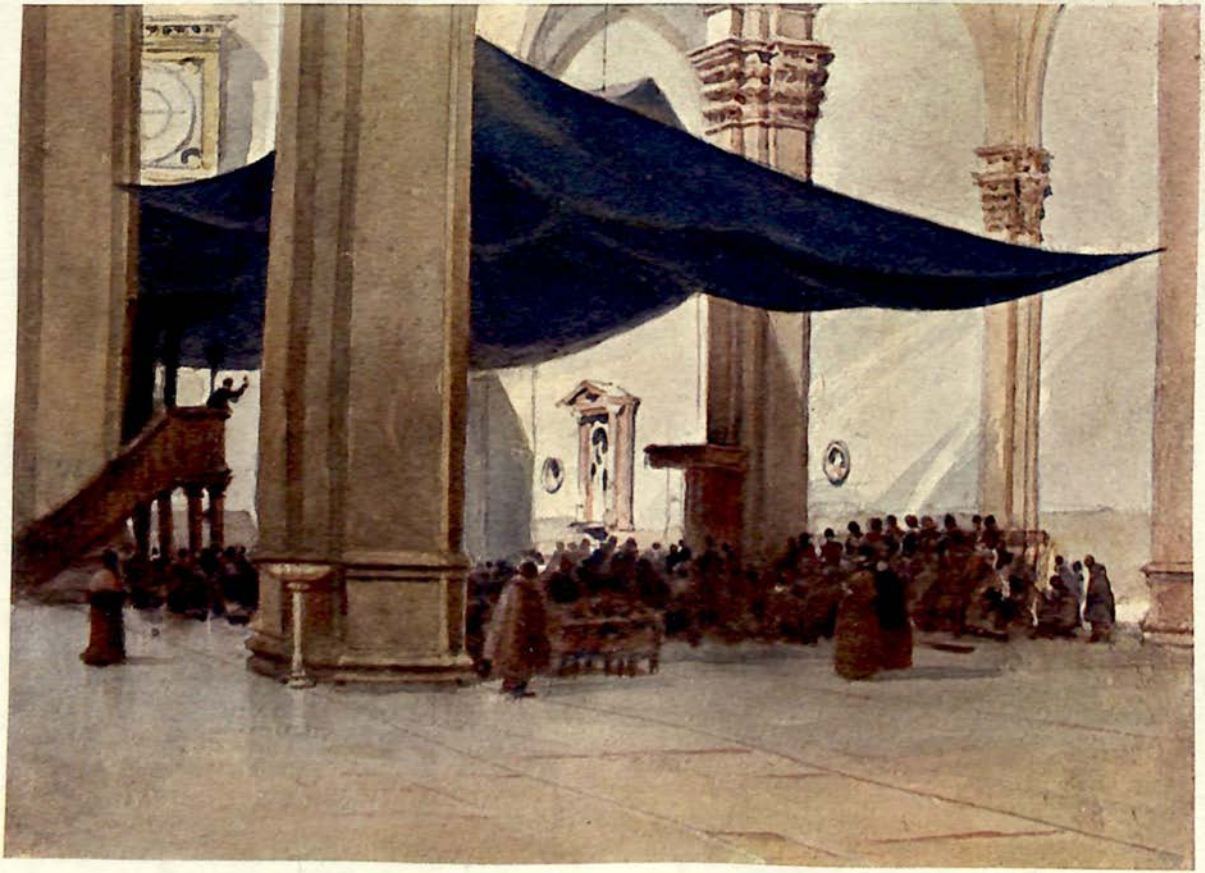
the Gospel of the day. At the same time the banns are published, and the notices relating to fasts and festivals given out. He who has not been to a parish mass has missed a very characteristic bit of Italian life. The *spiegazione* is an excellent institution; it is largely owing to this that the Italian lower classes who practise their religion have so intimate a knowledge of Gospel history. Note that the small wooden pulpit—not to be confounded with the Lenten pulpit—which stands in the right transept of the Florence Duomo, is used for the explanation of the Gospel, and for the further instruction in doctrine given every Sunday in a Cathedral by the Canon Theologian.

The Lenten preaching is a great feature of Tuscan life. In all Tuscan towns, and in many a Tuscan village, a special preacher is appointed to preach this long course of sermons. The religious Orders, naturally, supply the greater number of the preachers, and sometimes their convents are so denuded by the Lenten exodus, that they have to put students in residence to keep up the choir. There is always an important meeting of the Provincials and their Definitors before Lent, to allot the preachers and arrange for the re-distribution of the conventual families. In a large city there will always be several courses of sermons going on at the same time. At Florence, for instance, there is *quaresimale* at the Duomo, at Santa Maria Novella, and at Santa Felicità. There used to be at Santa Croce and San Lorenzo, but these have now ceased. Santa Felicità is in communication

FLORENCE, INTERIOR OF THE DUOMO DURING THE LENTEN PREACHING

"When Baldassare pushed behind the curtain and saw the interior of the Duomo before him, he gave a start of astonishment, and stood still before the doorway. He had expected to see a vast nave empty of everything except lifeless emblems, with perhaps a few worshippers in the distant choir following a monotonous chant, and he saw instead a vast multitude of warm living faces upturned in breathless silence towards the pulpit."—*Romola.*

Plate 41



with the Pitti Palace, and here the Grand Dukes came unseen to hear the *quaresimale*, another dark use to which they put their secret gallery. The course, which opens on Ash Wednesday (usually with a reference to the last end of man: *memento homo, quia pulvis est, et in pulverem reverteris*), consists of one sermon a day throughout Lent, lasting from eleven to twelve. Nothing under an hour would content a Tuscan. Generally, as at Florence, there is no sermon on Saturdays or mi-carême, or the four last days of Holy Week. On Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday the sermons are in the afternoon. The sermon on the Passion is preached on Good Friday at seven in the morning. This must not be confounded with the *Agonia*, or Three Hours' preaching, lasting from twelve to three. On Monday in Holy Week that great *telone* has to be taken down to make room for the apparatus of the *scoppio del carro*, and the preacher has to get on as well as he can without it. The Lenten preaching lasts till Easter Tuesday. The preacher, if a secular priest, wears a surplice over his cassock, if a prelate the rochet and mantella, if a religious simply the habit of his Order. The Archbishop attends on the first day to give the preacher his benediction. Some of the canons are always present, and the seminarists attend on Thursdays and Sundays.

The Lenten course means something like forty sermons, and it takes a real preacher to perform such a feat. That is the best of the Italian sermon: you never hear a man from the pulpit who cannot

preach. If he were no preacher he would not be there. His bishop would forbid it. Not that it would need episcopal prohibition: the congregation would promptly walk out of the church and leave him to preach to the roof and rafters. An Italian congregation is extremely critical. I pity a new Lenten preacher on the occasion of his first sermon, especially if he be young and regard simplicity of language as a virtue. There are old fellows there, typical old Tuscan *babbi*, who have attended the *quaresimale* for the last fifty years, and who hold fast to the traditions of a flowery and ponderous age. I have heard them grumbling as we stream out of the church: "Well, things are coming to a pretty pass when they send us a boy like that. That's talk, that's not oratory. Anybody can talk. Where were his periods, where were his similes, where were his enumerations? Why, a baby could have understood that sermon!" "Well, well," says a more charitably-disposed old boy, some ten years younger, "give him a chance. Let's hear him again to-morrow." But even if the grumble continue all through Lent, these old Tuscan *babbi* cannot possibly keep away. Habit is too strong for them. The Lenten course is a treat, not a task; a pleasure, not a duty. The Tuscan enjoys a good sermon much as the Englishman enjoys a good political speech. It is not religious motives that draw half the men to the *quaresimale*, but the love of oratory. Ah me! those poor auxiliary verbs! They may never now take their right place before as a simple help, but must follow after from afar

as recherché ornamentation. Ah me! the height of those stilts, the length of those strides! Then the gorgeous similes, the rolling periods, the sesquipedalian language, and above all the interminable enumerations. That is what the Tuscan *babbo* loves above all: enumerations. Is it the virtues of a saint: enumerate; is it the vices of the obdurate: enumerate; the civilising influence of the religious orders: enumerate at great length; the saving mission of the Church: ah! there's a fine chance for enumeration, admitting of the highest flights of rhetoric.

Of course the sermon is not intended for that purpose, but it does constitute a delightful lesson in Italian, gratis. I wonder that the foreigner so seldom has the wiliness to avail himself of this exceptional chance. Besides, the Lenten course is something of an education in itself, and the amount of history, biography, hagiography, anecdote, grave and gay, liturgy and doctrine, picked up by the way is very well worth having. The Lenten sermons, though properly oratorical, are becoming more and more like conferences. This is the age of apologetics and problems of the day. The preacher addresses us as "Signori" or "Signori miei," while to our parish priest speaking to us from the altar steps we are "Fratelli miei," or "fratelli carissimi," or "fratelli dilettissimi," or "beatissimi nel Signore." The Lenten preacher's fancy is now practically unrestrained. But there is one observance which he dare not forego: on *Lætare* Sunday the popular voice, ever devoted to its

dead, requires that he should preach to us on Purgatory.

The beginner in the language would draw most profit from the early morning "spiegazione del Vangelo," because, knowing the Gospel of the day, he would already be familiar with the subject of the discourse. Another interesting form of preaching is the mission. The mission is a series of special services and sermons, lasting about ten days. Three sermons a day are preached, usually by three different missioners, early morning (5.30), eleven o'clock, and again in the evening. Missioners always preach from a platform, never from the pulpit. If Apostolic missioners, as they nearly always are, they wear a large crucifix in their belts or girdles. The mission sermon is a very different matter from the Lenten sermon. There is oratory, but no thought of oratory; the missioner's one concern is change of heart in the populace. And his success is surprising. Sarnelli, in his Ecclesiastical Letters, has indeed well said that one mission will do more good than ten *quaresimali*. The Italian preacher is at his highest and best when, as Apostolic missioner, he is calling the people to repentance and regeneration.

It is impossible to understand Italian life without frequenting the sermon: and the sermon is usually the last thing a foreigner finds out. Let this be my excuse for having gone into some trifling details not wholly connected with the subject of this picture.

FLORENCE, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM SAN DOMENICO AFTER A FALL OF SNOW

" . . . Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered
well off the heights;
You have the brown ploughed land before, where the
oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hill over-smoked behind by the faint grey
olive-trees."—*Robert Browning.*

Plate 42

CHAPTER XII

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF FLORENCE

SETTIGNANO AND SAN DOMENICO

ONE of the delights of the hills round Florence is their entire rusticity. The easy access from the city, the constant coming and going, the numerous foreign settlers, the eager seekers of *villeggiature*, have not destroyed the country life of these radiant rustic regions. For this reason it may be truly said that Florence has no suburbs. A few minutes in the tram and the traveller might be in the olive orchards of the Versilia, or taking agricultural notes from the simple courteous peasants in the heart of the fertile Casentino. The dwellers about Fiesole, at San Domenico, at Settignano, at Maiano, at Careggi, are so many country gentlemen, and are as busied about pressing oil, or making wine, or drying orris-root, as are the dwellers in the town about study, painting, banking, or the delightful Florentine pleasures of this world. These inhabitants of the alluring hills have a character so much their own, that I seem to recognise a country mouse in the Via Tornabuoni, though it has only taken him a few minutes to get there.

English settlers abound on the hills, another proof of what I have said, that the Englishman, rather than any other foreigner, has the keenest eye for the recondite beauties, and I will now add for the solid comforts, of Italy. Life up here is entirely charming: completely rustic, as I said, but wholly free from the bumpkin element. Our town-mouse friends are frequent visitors, keep our interest fresh and keen in the city's doings, and prevent us ever sinking into mere Bœotian country mice. It is the country, agricultural, horticultural, floricultural, but the country under ideal conditions.

One of its chief joys is the constant beauty of the outlook. Whether it be winter with the distant hills covered with snow, or summer with its green floor below and blue vault above, the scene is everlastingly beautiful. Then Florence is for ever under our eyes, the text of morning and evening meditations, daily increasing in beauty, as it seems, because of our daily increasing love and understanding of it. So great is its individuality, so far-reaching its part in universal history, so potent its possession of our better self, that we think of it as a system apart: there is that resplendent sun, Brunelleschi's cupola, with, for moon, the lesser cupola of the Medicean Chapel; there are those seven planets in the Florentine heaven, the Torre del Leone, the Campanile, the tower of the Bargello, the cupola of Santo Spirito, the spires of the Badia, of Santa Croce, of Santa Maria Novella, with constellations too many to enumerate; and there over towards San Donnino is the milky way

FLORENCE, THE DUOMO FROM THE PONTE VECCHIO

"FLORENCE really is thoroughly delightful to think about: it retains the lines, the features that it had in its heroic age. . . . Whereas at Rome you must scrape in an ashpit for a bone of the real Romans."—*Wm. Cory.*

Plate 43

PONTE VECCHIO FLORENCE
A·N·WALLEN MURRAY
1869.

of the winding Arno. Every glance at the city recalls the noblest memories: the Gonfalonieri and great Princes who have governed the State, the holy Archbishops who have ruled the Church, the Saints who here chose the better part, the glories of the Franciscan, the greater glories of the Dominican, the civilising mission of the Benedictine Order, the builders, the painters, the sculptors, the poets, the scholars, the soldiers, the merchants—memories of all are recalled by a glance at one or other of these constellations in the Florentine firmament. Truly our morning and evening meditations never lack for a subject, and are rich in food for the mind and fraught with good for the soul.

Settignano's chief boast is that of having produced the sculptor Desiderio, and it is no mean boast to have given to the world the author of the Marsuppini tomb in Santa Croce, the Tabernacle in San Lorenzo, and the bust of Marietta Strozzi. Indeed, these hills were fruitful of sculptors; suffice it here to mention Mino da Fiesole, Benedetto da Maino, and Benedetto da Rovezzano. Grace and simplicity, taste and felicity, a complete accord with nature, are Desiderio's chief characteristics, and had he lived, says Vasari, he would have outstripped all his fellows in art, as he already had done in grace. He died at the early age of thirty-six in 1464. A statue to him has just been erected in the piazza at Settigano. Vasari reproduces a neat little poem about him which lingers rather pleasantly in the memory:

Come vide natura
Dar Desiderio ai freddi marmi vita,
E poter la scultura
Agguagliar sua bellezza alma e infinita,
Si fermò sbigottita
E disse: omai sarà mia gloria oscura.
E pieno d'alto sdegno
Troncò la vita a sí bel ingegno.
Ma in van, perchè costui
Diè vita eterna ai marmi, e i marmi a lui.*

I must not allow myself to dwell on Settignano, nor yet overmuch on San Domenico. The great attraction of this place is the Dominican Church and Convent founded in 1406 by the blessed Giovanni Dominici ("Fuit Joannes potens in opere et sermone coram Deo et omni populo" †) as a convent in which the arduous rule of the Friars Preachers was to be observed in all its first rigours. Here the blessed Angelico, called of Fiesole, lived and painted. But the place is more intimately associated with another great luminary of the Order, another bright star in the Florentine firmament.

* The following is a rude unmetrical translation:
When Mother Nature saw
Cold marble taking life at Desiderio's hands,
And plastic art begin
To rival her life-giving beauties infinite,
She stood dismayed
And said, behold how is my glory dimmed.
So full of deepest wrath
She did to death this cunning master-mind.
But all in vain: for he
Gave deathless life to stone, from stone took lasting immortality.

† From the sixth lesson of his Office in the Dominican Breviary, June 10th.

The first novice to present himself at the new convent was a lad of thirteen or fourteen, Niccolo Pierozzi, who, taking the name of Antonino in religion, afterwards became Archbishop of Florence, and now lives in the hearts of all men as Sant' Antonino, second patron of the Lily City after San Zenobio. He is the Florentine Saint *par excellence*—I suppose the most beautiful character in all Tuscan history. If I were asked which of the Saints was the most "charming," as we understand the word, I should hesitate between Saint Francis, Saint Philip Neri, and Saint Antoninus.

Butler's life of the Saint, though unduly brief, is most felicitous. Little Anthony ("piccolo di corpo, ma grande di animo") was born at Florence in 1389, in the same year, that is, as that strenuous supporter of all his holy work, Cosmus, Pater Patriæ.

> From the cradle he was modest, bashful, docile, and had no inclination but to piety [says Butler]. . . . It was his only pleasure to read the lives of Saints and other good books, to converse with pious persons, or employ himself in prayer, to which he was much given from his infancy. . . . By means of a happy memory, a solid judgment, and quick penetration, assisted by an assiduous application, he became an able master at an age when others scarce begin to understand the first elements of science. But his passion for learning was not equal to his ardour to perfect himself in the science of salvation.

He rose rapidly in the Order, becoming successively Prior of San Domenico, Santa Maria Novella and the new Convent of San Marco. In 1446, at the suggestion, it is said, of Fra Angelico, Pope Eugenius IV. appointed him to the Archbishopric

of Florence. The humble friar was dismayed when he heard of the high honour that was put upon him, and wrote to the Pope "begging that he would not now treat him as an enemy whom he had honoured with so many marks of friendship." But Pope Eugenius was firm, and Father Antoninus had to accept his promotion, to the great joy of the Florentines, and took possession of his bishopric in March 1446. The story of the thirteen years of his Archiepiscopal rule is one of the brightest pages in Florentine history. The charm of his presence, his apostolic life, his devotion to the poor, changed the face of the city, and the great Cosimo used to say that he did not question but that the preservation of the Republic under its dangers was owing chiefly to the merits and prayers of the holy Archbishop.

His regulation of his household and conduct [Butler continues] was a true imitation of the primitive apostolic Bishops. His table, dress, and furniture showed a perfect spirit of poverty, modesty, and simplicity. It was his usual saying that all the riches of a successor of the Apostles ought to be his virtue. . . . He gave audience every day to all that addressed themselves to him, but particularly declared himself the father and protector of the poor. His purse and granaries were in a manner totally theirs; when these were exhausted, he gave them often part of his scanty furniture and clothes. . . . One only mule served all the necessities of his family, and this he often sold for the relief of some poor person, on which occasion some wealthy citizen would buy it, to restore it again as a present to the charitable Archbishop.

The Saint had a most tender regard for the poor who were ashamed to make known their necessities (the "poveri vergognosi" who to this day in Tus-

FLORENCE FROM THE OLIVE GARDENS OF SAN DOMENICO

"In our wanderings amongst the gardens and olive grounds we used to be joined by the children of Walter Savage Landor, who was at that time residing with his wife and family in a villa near Fiesole. A more joyous and happy company of children than we formed could not well be imagined. Even at that early age. . . . I was never tired, stretched under the shadow of an olive-tree, of contemplating the glorious view of Florence beneath, with the majestic cupola of Brunelleschi and the graceful campanile of Giotto rising above the city."—*A. H. Layard.*

cany are difficult to find out), and made special provision for helping them secretly. The necessity of merit or morality, the torture of a schedule of probing questions, were unknown to relief in these days of large-hearted liberality; physical need was the only requisite to secure the unorganised charity of these prodigal saints. But Little Anthony was down on the professional beggar.

Being informed that two blind beggars had amassed, the one two hundred, the other three hundred ducats, he took the money from them, and distributed it among the real objects of charity, charging himself, however, with the maintenance of these two for the rest of their lives.

How characteristically Antoninian is that last delightful touch!

Pope Eugenius died in his arms at Rome on February 23, 1447, and Antoninus hurried back to Florence, where the plague had begun to show itself, which raged the whole year following.

The holy Archbishop exposed himself first, and employed his clergy, both secular and regular, especially those of his own Order, in assisting the infected, so that almost all the friars of St. Mark, St. Mary Novella, and Fiesole were swept away by the contagion, and new recruits were sent from the province of Lombardy to inhabit those houses. The famine, as is usual, followed this first scourge. The holy Archbishop stripped himself of almost everything, and by the influence of his words and example many rich persons were moved to do the like. He obtained from Rome, particularly from the Pope, great succours for the relief of the distressed. Indeed, the Pope never refused anything that he requested, and ordered that no appeals should be received at Rome from any sentence passed by him.

In the midst of all his labours, hidden by his

serenity of countenance, his charm of manner, his peace of mind, he practised the greatest austerities, eating little, sleeping less, lying on boards, and generally treating Brother Ass very ill indeed. He was adored by his people, and even the reprobate found there was no resisting him. The very man who attempted his life, being cheerfully forgiven, yielded to his charm, and became a penitent in the Order of Saint Francis. Saint Antoninus died on May 2, 1459; his last words were "Servire Deo, regnare est," and it may indeed be said that he ruled in Florence by reason of a simple, humble, docile service of God.

ORRIS-ROOT

One of the beauties of these Florentine hills is the orris, and it is not only beautiful, but the country gentlemen aforesaid find it very profitable in a good season. It is the root of this plant which forms the basis of all scents, and "the trade" cannot get on without it. Why, I know not; but "the trade" has elected to quote this featherweight article by the ton. A fair average price for a ton of orris-root is £50. In 1892 as much as £120 a ton was paid; in 1898—a bad year—as little as £26. But it will be seen that the orris can be a very important flower to the dwellers in this part of the Garden of Italy. The only orris which is in any way serviceable in the manufacture of perfumery grows in the neighbourhood of Florence and the

FLORENCE FROM POGGIO GHERARDO

"I LOVE Florence—the place looks exquisitely beautiful in its garden-ground of vineyard and olive-trees sung round by the nightingales day and night. If you take one thing with another, there is no place in the world like Florence, I am persuaded, for a place to live in."—*E. B. Browning.*

Plate 45

Florence
From Settignano
A. H. Hallam Murray

neighbourhood of Verona. It is odd that two districts, so dissimilar and so far apart, should produce the like rare treasure. I cannot account for it, but that the districts are dissimilar in appearance let the accompanying sketch of the country round Verona suffice to demonstrate without further comment.

The orris is the *Iris Florentina*, called by the Italians *Giaggiolo*. Of course there are plenty of other irises in the world: they are pretty to look at and pleasant to smell, but quite useless to "the trade." It is therefore necessary to distinguish between iris and orris; all orris is iris, but not all iris is orris. The flower of the *Iris Florentina* is white and sweet-smelling. It flourishes to greatest advantage in a stony soil, limestone by preference, and has a natural fancy for being planted upon the low, rough stone walls with which these hills are terraced. It takes two years and even three years —all depends upon the nature of the soil—for the root to come to the size and condition required by "the trade." When the root or rhizome is dug up, four or five fresh-looking shoots are found growing out of it. These are detached and planted so as to form the new orris beds. The root itself is peeled and dried in the sun, when it becomes white, and is found to emit an odour of sweetest violets. The usual harvesting time is in the latter half of June.

Human ingenuity has fashioned a number of curious articles out of the root. I have made no secret of my fondness for prying into Tuscan industries: as there is not a scrap of literature on

this subject except an official report, will the reader bear with me if I place on record some account of it in this volume?

I need say nothing of the fine, soft, white powder into which orris-root is ground, for that is done all the world over, but have you ever heard of orris-root beads? That, as you will see, is a sufficiently surprising industry. In Italian the beads are called *palline*, and in French *boules d'iris*. These beads have nothing to do with bracelets or necklaces. The medical men of France and Italy a hundred years ago were of the opinion that the best means of curing certain diseases of the blood was to keep a constant open wound in the body of the sufferer, usually in the arm, but sometimes also in the leg. A small cut was lanced, say in the arm; a small ivory ball was forced into it so as to make a rounded hole, and into this hole one of these orris-root beads was *daily* inserted so as to keep the wound constantly open. Orris-root dilates in a liquid substance: that seems to have been the reason for its adoption in this singular branch of surgery. The wound was then covered with a raised wire-grated bandage, so as to prevent irritation from the patient's clothes. An heroic remedy truly, and many an arm is said to have been perpetually withered by this drastic treatment. The beads are made in about twenty-two different sizes, and not so many years ago something like twenty millions of them were exported every year from Leghorn. Even now the annual export is quite four millions. Modern science has, of course,

FLORENCE, VIEW ACROSS THE PLAIN TO THE HILLS

"THE Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and the sky doth lay;
But when night comes a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm."

Shelley.

Plate 46

entirely condemned the system, but the figure of export is evidence that it still prevails, and largely too. Allot 365 beads to each sufferer, and the Leghorn export shows that about eleven thousand people in the year are still submitted to the treatment. More than this, at Paris, the centre of civilisation, there is also a workshop for the manufacture of these beads with a large output, so that probably twenty thousand patients every year still undergo this old-fashioned heroic remedy. Almost the whole of the Leghorn export goes to Lyons, and it must therefore be by French peasants that the treatment is mainly adopted. The practice has died out in Italy, but it is still not uncommon to meet old people who have been subjected to it in their childhood and youth.

Another curious article made from the root is the *dentaruolo*, or orris-root "finger" (French, *hochet pour dentition*). These fingers are flat and oval-shaped, and vary in length from two and a half to four inches. They are simply used in place of the old-fashioned coral. Not only do they serve the purpose of assisting teething, but the very slight quantity of juice absorbed in the process of sucking is said to be an excellent digestive. The idea is German, "fingers" having first been made at Ebingen in Wurtemberg about twenty years ago. I do not know who the originator was, or whether the idea has obtained the approval of any of the great German doctors, but the manufacture is considerable. Quite half a million are sent from Leghorn every year to Germany, France, and even

to the enlightened United States of America. England alone holds back, but some day, perhaps, we shall see the coral disappear from our nurseries, and the orris-root finger take its time-honoured place.

Then orris-root reduced to fine grains also has its uses. These grains are prettily coloured blue, red, green or purple, simply to look nice, and sent away to Germany and Austria, where it is the custom to throw them in handfuls upon the fire so as to give an agreeable odour to salons and entrance halls. Now that the system of flats is coming so much into vogue in England, this form of orris-root might be found very useful. Some people, in their London flats, burn cedar-wood to take away the smell of cooking. Surely the orris-root, which simply suggests sweet-smelling flowers, would be the preferable of the two?

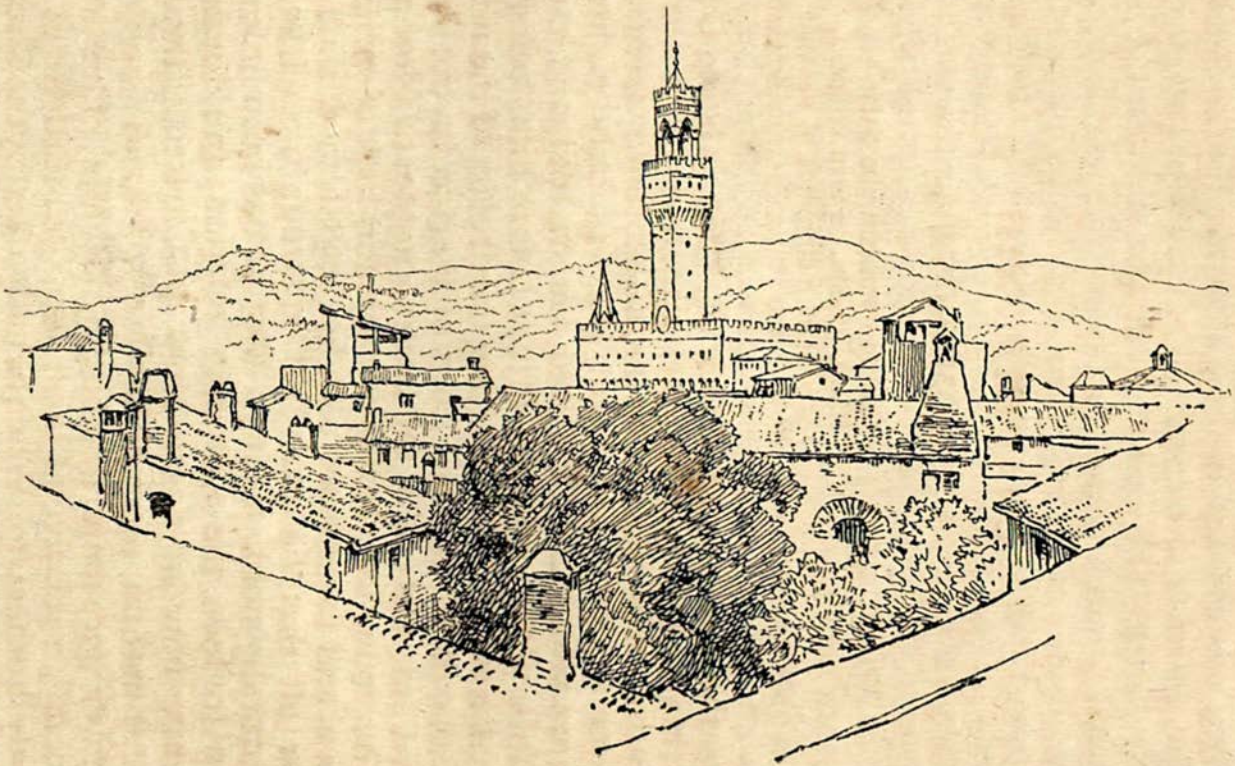
Orris-root in the form of tiny chips (Italian, *ritagli;* French, *déchets*) also serves a practical purpose. The South German and Austrian, and, I think, the Russian gentry, make their servants and dependants chew it so as to remove the smell of tobacco or garlic. It is only another form of the United States practice of chewing odoriferous gums. One of the trials of foreign travel to the unseasoned Englishman is to be shaved by a barber who has been eating garlic. I recommend him to travel with a supply of orris-root *déchets*, and he will always be in a position to offer a remedy.

Finally, all the filings and shavings of the orris-root (Italian, *raspature;* French, *rapures*) which are produced in making these articles also have a use.

They are converted into a strong liquid essence. Three tons of shavings will make about two pounds of essence. The essence is responsible for the bouquet in much wine, the bitter in some beer, and the savour of several syrups. When wine is made from grapes which have grown alongside the orris-beds, it has a flavour that many palates find delicious: the powerful scent of the rhizomes has entered the sap of the vines and perfumed it. But it is said that a few drops of the manufactured essence will produce a precisely similar effect.

I have thought that it might interest the reader to know how many and how curious are the uses to which the root of the white flower that he has admired so often on these hills is put. But if he desire to see these things in the making he must turn aside for a space from the old road through France to Florence, and visit the great harbour of the Tyrrhenian sea. There was once a workshop in Florence; the only one now left in Tuscany is that of Madame Felice Loraux, at Leghorn. Here, too, he will see the industry to the best advantage. The beads are made at Paris, the "fingers" in Wurtemberg, the root is ground to powder all the world over; but it is only in Madame Loraux' workshop in Leghorn where all the various forms of worked orris-root may be seen in full activity under the roof of one and the same establishment.*

* I made a report on this curious industry to my Government, with the result that Sir William Thiselton-Dyer asked for samples. These, I believe, are in the Kew Gardens Museum. I just mention the fact in case one in ten thousand may feel some real curiosity about these singular forms of plant products.



CHAPTER XIII

VALLOMBROSA

> Così fu nominato una badia
> Ricca, e bella, nè men religiosa,
> E cortese, a chiunque vi venìa.
>
> ARIOSTO.

ON the morning of March 26, 1003, it being Good Friday, a young knight, attended by a trusty squire, was riding towards Florence from the direction of Passignano. He was only eighteen years of age, high-spirited, we are told, and handsome, with a brilliant future before him, being at that time heir to his father Gualberto, of the noble house of Visdomini, Lord of Petroio in the Val-di-Pesa, and one of the leading nobles of Florence. The young knight has a particular look of earnestness and fierce resolve on his boyish face, though, for all that, he may still be struggling with his naturally noble feelings. For he has been brought up to love the Christian religion, and loves it, while now he has a most un-Christian, though very natural, piece of business on hand: he is in search once more, that he may kill him, of his arch-enemy, a relative of the house, the murderer of his only brother Ugo. When he had passed by the Church

of San Miniato, about half-way down between the church and the city, there, lo and behold! comes the enemy riding leisurely up the hill alone, unattended, unsuspecting, perhaps like a good Christian on his way to the Good Friday functions at the Abbey Church. Young Visdomini whipped out his sword, set spurs to his horse, and with a shout of triumph charged down the hill full tilt. But the enemy, seeing that he was a dead man, slipped from his horse, and kneeling on the ground, his arms crossed in saltire, was beseeching—not that his adversary would spare him, that was altogether too impossible to hope—but that the Lord Jesus, Who that day died for sinners, would have mercy upon his soul also, and spare him in the dread day of Judgment. When this high-spirited lad saw in his enemy's folded arms the sign of the Cross, when he heard the sound of the Holy Name, and recalled the solemn meaning of the Feast, a sudden revulsion of feeling came over him. He lifted up his abject enemy, embraced him tenderly, and in loving accents said to him: "Be thou to me in future a brother in place of my brother Ugo!" Then together they ascended the hill, entered the Church of San Miniato, where the Cluniac monks were celebrating the Mass of the Pre-sanctified, and there, as was the custom in those ages of faith, the young cavaliere confirmed in the presence of God that which he had promised in the sight of man.* This noble, chivalrous, large-hearted youth

* Don F. Tarani, C.S.B. Della Vita di San Giovanni Gualberto. Udine, 1903, p. 12.

VALLOMBROSA, MONASTERY

"SHOULD you be in Florence in the summer, visit Vallombrosa, one of the greatest natural curiosities in Tuscany, though Milton mentions only an ordinary circumstance, that of the fall of the leaves in autumn. You will be astonished the whole way at the boldness of the scenery:—and not least, at the mountain itself which looks proudly down on all that surrounds it. San Giovanni Gualberto (985) founded the convent in the midst of woods on the top of the Apennines, inhabited by wolves and bears; it has now become one of the pleasantest spots in Tuscany. A forest of chestnuts leads you to a forest of firs, and you at length arrive at the convent, situated on a delightful lawn, enclosed in an amphitheatre of wood."—*Beckford Letters.*

Plate 47

was Giovanni de' Visdomini, known to all the world now as Saint John Gualbert, first Abbot of Vallombrosa, and founder of the Vallombrosan Congregation of Benedictine monks; and if for centuries there has been a conspicuous home of sanctity at Vallombrosa, and if now it is one of the most delightful of summer resorts, it all had a beginning in the forgiveness of an emeny. It is no wonder that the Church, with a touch of that inspired genius which runs throughout the Liturgy, has allotted for the Feast of San Giovanni Gualberto a Gospel not to be found in the Common of a Confessor and Abbot, but the Gospel of the Friday after Ash-Wednesday: *Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his qui oderunt vos*, &c. (Matt. v. 43–48.)

Vallombrosa is now very easy of access: an hour about from Florence to Sant' Ellero; about another hour in the Funicular from Sant' Ellero to the Saltino station, and there we are, three thousand feet and more above the level of the Tuscan sea, gazing over all the beauties of the Val d'Arno Superiore, and only twenty minutes walk from the world-famed Abbey. The Funicular railway was made in 1892 by the exertions of Count Joseph Telfener, since deceased. The system is cogwheel and infallible; no accident has ever occurred, for no accident could occur. We are pushed up the mountain side in open carriages, and freely enjoy a glorious view, passing first through vineyards and olive orchards, then constantly through mountain shrubberies and woods of juniper, arbutus,

ilex, beech, and chestnut (how beneficently the air changes with the first appearance of the chestnut), until we land on a level with the pine-forests. Outside the station is the Grand Hotel Saltino, finely placed to catch all the breezes from the four quarters of the globe; opposite is a Hotel "Milton," as one might have expected after all those countless references to a certain quotation which nothing shall induce me to quote. Here, too, are the few shops and most of the villini and châlets. On the road to the abbey we pass on the right the Grand Hotel Croce di Savoia; on the left the noble Hotel Castello di Acquabella. I may call it noble (though they would fain have it "grand" also) for it is really a fine château in mediæval style, built for himself twenty-five years ago by Count Pio Resse, with no thought of the accommodation of pleasure-seekers. Soon we are in the first of the pine-forests with its "insuperable height of loftiest shade," and the communal road takes on that billiard-table-like smoothness peculiar to roads that are sheltered by pines. We pause for a moment to drink in the strong, exhilarating, aromatic odour of the forest, and my companion would fain have broken away for a sylvan ramble. But I am in haste to be at the abbey, and drag him reluctant along with me. In a brief space the towers and campanile of that vast historic building come in sight, and in a few minutes more we have passed through the courtyard and found cool shelter in the dark Abbey Church.

* * * * *

The retrospective, the ruminative fit, as was natural in that place, came upon us, and our thoughts flew back centuries to another Abbey, the Cluniac Abbey of San Miniato above Florence, in whose church we left the young Cavaliere Giovanni de' Visdomini perfecting the noblest act that one human being can do to another. The ancient Crucifix of the church, now in Santa Trinita at Florence, graciously inclined to him in sign of approval of his heroic sacrifice, and Giovanni instantly became a changed man. He took refuge with the monks and begged to be made one of them. When Gualberto, the great and powerful Signore of Petroio, came to the Abbey in hot anger to take his son from the grasp, as he thought, of designing monks, Giovanni, standing before the altar, with his own hand cut off his thick long hair and clothed himself in a Cluniac cowl which he had borrowed. This was an age when the virtues (like the vices) took giant shape, and the great heart of Gualberto was immediately subdued by his son's heroism, while with a heroism almost as great, he reconciled himself to the loss of an heir, and saw his fief taken by another in the times to come. Giovanni, perhaps in admiration of this magnanimous father, added the name of Gualberto to his own, and the two names have remained inseparable ever since. I never see him in art, or in his churches, without thinking of the father's sacrifice as well as of the son's, and I trust that the shadowy tradition may be true which makes Gualberto die at Vallombrosa, a holy monk.

Giovanni Gualberto remained four years in the

Cluniac Abbey of San Miniato, and so greatly had he edified all by his wisdom, fervour, and sanctity, that the monks at the end of that period elected him their Abbot. This dignity he declined, and to make a long story short, departed from San Miniato, by leave of his superiors, with one companion, in search of a hermit life on the Apennines. In his wanderings he came to Camaldoli, and stayed awhile in the new flourishing hermitage there, taking counsel about his state with that wonderful man of God, Romuald.* It might have been thought that here, in this holy camp with so holy a leader, Giovanni Gualberto would have realised his ideal; but he felt himself called, though as yet he saw not the way, to a life in some respects different, and again he set forth on his wanderings. Saint Romuald parted from him with tears, gave him his blessing, and taking him aside uttered a prophecy of the future greatness of his institute, which is famous in the Vallombrosan Order. These two great Saints at parting vowed a perpetual fraternity between their two institutes, and for a long time if, say, a Camaldolese was visiting Vallombrosa, he would take off his own and put on a Vallombrosan habit as a symbol that the monks of the two orders were brothers. The same custom prevailed, of course, if a Vallombrosan visited Camaldoli. Don Diego de' Franchi records having witnessed it in 1609.†

* Saint Romuald was some thirty years older than Saint John Gualbert. He was born about 956, and died in 1027.

† In his "Historia del Patriarcha S. Giovangualberto." Florence, 1640, p. 77.

Saint John Gualbert went down the mountain side, and setting his face towards Florence, crossed the smiling Casentino, and climbing, very likely, the Consuma Pass, came to a place on the Secchieta called Acquabuona, or Acquabella (hence the name of the modern hotel), from the excellence and abundance of its water. This place is now more fitly called Vallombrosa, the shady valley, from its pines. But when Giovanni Gualberto came here all was bare rock. It is true that pines will make their own soil, but they need at least some soil as a beginning. That beginning was placed there by the fostering hand of the monks, and so it may be said, in a sense, that they not only planted the forests, but made the very soil of this enchanting spot. Dig but vigorously enough, and you will soon come upon the bedrock in the forests. Our holy wanderer found that Acquabella was too near the road for his pious purpose, and penetrated further into the forest. There, to his astonishment, he found a little hermitage newly-made of the branches of trees, inhabited, to his still greater wonder, by two monks of the Abbey of Settimo, living thus by leave of their Abbot. He, with his companion, joined himself to them, and in these four Religious we have the first beginning of the Vallombrosan Institute. This was in the year 1008,* but according to tradition, Giovanni Gualberto lived as an

* The dates I give here are the traditional ones, and are open to some objections. Needless to say, this rapid little sketch makes no pretensions to critical accuracy.

almost complete solitary under the shelter of a beech tree for another seven years

Contento nei pensier' contemplativi.
Par. xxi. 117.

We shall see a third descendant of this beech, sprung from the original root, on our way up from the Abbey to the *Paradisino*. By 1015 the hermits had grown in number, and drew closer together in cells surrounded by an inclosure; the eremitical idea was on the wane, the cœnobitic about to spring into vigorous life. It is wonderful to read of the great freedom of the spiritual life among these first athletes of the Vallombrosan Order, a freedom possible only in the days when there were giants moving on the interior way. These early hermits had not even a Superior; each hermit consulted with that hermit whom he thought likeliest to draw him nearest to God, and though they professed the rule of Saint Bennet, yet the width and elasticity of that great spiritual charter left them room for the greatest diversity of life. But such periods in the religious state are rare after the first great centuries of the Christian Commonwealth. The great work of Saint Romuald was to discipline the hermit life of his day, and redeem it from the fantastic exaggerations which are the danger of the solitary not living under regular obedience. Saint John Gualbert, by his great sanctity, his expert direction in the interior life, his commanding gifts and qualities, unconsciously developed into the leader of these recluses.

Itta, of the noble house of the Counts Guidi, abbess of the nunnery of Sant' Ellero at the foot of the mountain, was the ground landlady of these forests, and proud to have such holy men on her abbatial possessions, she presented them with a large tract of land. Giovanni Gualberto here built a modest monastery. He had a work to do, and needed monks whom he could send out into the world, and not hermits who would be bound to perpetual seclusion. Vallombrosa was then, and still is, in the diocese of Fiesole, and chroniclers assign the year 1018 as the date when the Institute was canonically erected by episcopal sanction. Not without a purpose did the saint now find himself living within sight and reach of Florence. Simony was rife in that diocese; Nicolaitanism flourished and grew apace: Saint John Gualbert was to become the terror of the Simoniacs, the hammer of the Nicolaitans: the two-headed beast that you will sometimes see in art under his feet symbolises the twin monster that was ravaging Tuscany at the time. By the end of his long life he and his monks had scotched, if not killed, the devastating dragon. They suffered persecution, spoliation, martyrdom even, at the hands of the avaricious and licentious, and cheerfully sacrificed themselves at all times for the welfare of the poor and ill-used. But into their long and gallant struggle for religious and moral reform it is impossible to enter here. I will briefly narrate but one incident typical of the times, because it is great in Vallombrosan annals, and has often been represented in art.

Pietro Mezzabarba had been simoniacally intruded into the see of Florence through Imperial influence. The fact was denied by the Bishop and his partisans; Saint John Gualbert knew the truth well enough, and openly denounced the Bishop. Recourse was had to Rome without success, for want of clear evidence perhaps, or owing to the skilfully used influence of Bishop Pietro. One night in 1062 the abbey of San Salvi, outside the old Porta alla Croce, which had come into Vallombrosan hands, was stormed by a band of desperadoes, emissaries of the infamous Bishop. The monks were in choir at the time: some were killed: all wounded and ill-treated: the abbey was sacked and finally set on fire. But the attack failed of its only object: the murder of the aged saint whose expected arrival there had been delayed by a day. This piece of villainy roused the people of Florence to the full. The agitation for the deprivation of the Bishop increased. But six years passed without any remedy. Then the people appealed to Saint John Gualbert to permit a judgment of God by fire, so that Rome, Florence, and all the world might be convinced that their Bishop was a simoniacal intruder. The saint consented. It was a thoroughly popular movement, organised, pushed on, and carried out by the people themselves. The place selected was the piazza in front of the Abbey of Settimo, by that time also a Vallombrosan house. Settimo is situated on the left bank of the Arno, between Signa and Florence, about six miles from that city. It was February 13, 1068; men and

women, clergy and laity, to the number of five thousand, streamed out of Florence at an early hour of that chill February morning. Saint John had chosen one of the lights of his Order, Don Pietro Aldobrandini, to undergo the terrible ordeal. The people piled up two great bonfires on the piazza in front of the Abbey Church, leaving a narrow passage between the two. Don Pietro said his Mass devoutly within, and having reached to the *Agnus Dei*, four monks came forth—one with a crucifix, another with holy water and an aspergillum, the third with a censer, the fourth with lighted candles. The stacks of wood were solemnly blessed and set alight from the blessed candles. When Mass was over, Don Pietro appeared, a serene imperturbable figure, having divested himself of his chasuble, but still wearing his alb, stole, and maniple, and bearing a cross between his hands. After praying aloud that God would show forth the justice of his judgments, he gave all his brethren the kiss of peace, and having signed himself with the cross he bore, he tranquilly entered the flames. Arrived at the end of the fiery alley, he found that he had dropped his maniple, and turning back to fetch it, again emerged scatheless from the fire. Then came his real danger: suffocation from the devotion of the people who crowded round him to kiss his hands and feet and sacred vestments. This, according to tradition, is the incident which gave the death blow to simony in Florence. The circumstances are related in an extraordinarily vivid and circumstantial letter of the clergy and people

of Florence to Pope Alexander II., praying him, after this evident manifestation of the finger of God, to remove their simoniacal Bishop.* Don Pietro was canonised, and is known as San Pietro Igneo from having passed unscathed through the fire. There is a picture of him in the sacristy of Santa Trinita at Florence, and a relief on one of the panels of its doors.

Saint John Gualbert died in 1073 aged eighty-eight, in the Abbey of Passignano, Val-di-Pesa, not far from the Castle of Petroio, the investiture of which he might at that moment have been enjoying, had he not chosen the better part. His feast is celebrated on July 12, now attended at Vallombrosa by many unlooked-for holiday-makers; his Order was solemnly confirmed in 1055; he was canonised by the voice of the people during his lifetime, and, after death, by Pope Celestin III. in 1193. The colour of the habit was at first grey;† afterwards changed to brown; and finally, in the sixteenth century, to black, as we now see it. As in the Camaldolese Order, so in the Vallombrosan, the eremitical life existed, but with a difference: Saint John Gualbert's sons were all professed as monks, some of whom volunteered as hermits; Saint Romuald's sons were all professed as her-

* This letter may be read in the original Latin and in an Italian translation in Don Diego de' Franchi's Life of the Saint, p. 453. Also in Latin in the *Acta Sanctorum*. Tom. iii. Julii, p. 376.

† It is said that Saint Francis, coming to Vallombrosa in 1224, on his way to La Verna, being wet through, the Abbot made him put on his grey cowl, in which the Saint finally departed: hence the grey of the early Franciscan habit.

mits, a number of whom lived as monks by reason of the demands upon their hospitality. But the hermits of Vallombrosa were never numerous, and the eremitical life had practically died out at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Note that Saint John Gualbert, though an abbot, was not a priest, was not even in minor orders, and so great was his humility and his veneration for the clerical state that he would not himself open a church door, but required that office to be done for him by one who was at least in Ostiarius' orders. He was the first founder to introduce the system of lay-brothers, now followed by all Orders. Of course there were plenty of monks in monasteries not in orders and in that sense laymen, but they were choir brothers and lived the regular community life. On account of the extensive manual labour at Vallombrosa, Saint John instituted lay brothers dispensed from office and attendance in choir, except at midnight. He introduced another great change into the religious life which has also been very generally followed. There was no Order in his day with one single chief. Each monastery was separate in itself, governed by its abbot, and no interchange of monks between one house and another was possible, because each monk had taken his vows for a particular house. Saint John Gualbert obtained that all the Vallombrosan monasteries should be subject to him as Abbot-General. (And since I am here speaking of the first Order that ever had a head, a mild protest against the wrong use of the word "General" in such a con-

nection may not be out of place. There is no such thing as the "General" of an Order; "general" is but an adjective determining the extension or quality of the real title: thus the head of the Friars Minor is a Minister-General, of the Dominicans a Master-General, of the Austin Friars a Prior-General, of the Minims a Corrector-General, of the Salesians a Rector-General; nay, there is not even such a person as a "General of the Jesuits"—their chief is a Provost-General: the only religious body that may lay claim to a "General" pure and simple is the Salvation Army).

The Vallombrosan Order is an essentially Tuscan institute. It spread certainly to Umbria, Lombardy, the Republic of Genoa, Rome, and there were once two houses in France. But it never really flourished outside Tuscany, and I believe the only non-Tuscan house now in existence is Santa Prassede in Rome. The Abbot-General was accorded many privileges by the Grand Dukes, and often held high office at Court: for this reason he was practically obliged to live at Santa Trinita in Florence, and was, I believe, the only head of an Order who did not reside in Rome. Even in quite recent times he was still in Tuscany—at Pescia—and only transferred his residence to Rome about three years ago.

It were impossible now to dwell upon the history of Vallombrosa, to write of the holy and great men it has produced, of the art treasures that once were here, of all that this home of learning and sanctity has done for literature, science, art, education, and

the general well-being of mankind. I suppose that next to Montecassino it is the most important Abbey in Italian history. It seems to have attracted all the world. No grand tour was complete without a visit to Vallombrosa. Beckford was here in 1780, and behaved rudely by his own showing.* He writes charmingly of the natural scenery, but is in a constant state of open, petty irritation with his kindly hosts. To him monks do not walk, they "waddle"; to him instead of pictures of health, owing to a simple life in a life-giving forest, they are "overgrown," "sleek," "rosy," "round," all except one who, for stage purposes, becomes a "tall spectre of a priest," driving the "pale and wan" Academy of Noble Florentine Youth before him "like a herd" to "their dark inclosure," and, he adds tragically, "presently the gates opening I saw them no more." How droll this note of tragedy sounds to the present generation; how could he expect to see them "more" if it were bedtime and there was a door between him and them? Mr. Eustace, of "Classical Tour" fame, was here in 1802, and for once writes sympathetically of a religious house. "The reader will learn with pleasure," he says, "that the monks of Vallombrosa are not idle solitaries; but that they unite like most of the ancient and many of the modern Benedictin establishments, the labour of public instruction with monastic discipline. Thus Vallombrosa is both an abbey and a college, and in its latter capacity furnishes an excellent seminary for the

* "Italy." Letter No. xvii.

education of the Florentine youth of rank, many of whom were there at the time of our visit. Their dress is a black gown, with a black collar lined and edged with white; we were present at one of their amusements, which was the *Calcio*, or balloon, a game in great repute both in Italy and France. Their looks and manners seemed to display the advantages both physical and moral of the situation." (Vol. iii. p. 383.) The pallor and wanness of the Florentine youth of rank have disappeared since Beckford's visit twenty-two years before, and from a cowering driven herd, dominated by the spectre of a priest, they have developed into noisy, romping schoolboys, the picture of health and happiness. Rest assured that Beckford's waddling monks had no more real existence than his pale, wan, driven schoolboys. Prejudice (and the "superior person" in him) had completely sealed up his eyes in such matters, and make him, man of talent though he was, a very bad judge of men and things in Italy.

The records of famous visitors to this historic place are full of interest, but it is time that we took a glance at modern Vallombrosa. Opposite the entrance to the abbey is the Grande Albergo della Foresta (more grandeur), delightfully situated as its name implies in the midst of the forest. This was once the *Foresteria*, or guest-house of the abbey, now considerably added to, and here, according to monastic ideas of hospitality, all the world, rich or poor, might have three days' entertainment free of cost. The abbey itself, the church, shrines,

chapels, observatory, hospice, Paradisino, farm-houses, lands, and forests, were taken possession of by the Government in 1866. The abbey buildings are occupied by the "Istituto Forestale," the only Italian Government school of forestry. Students are admitted at seventeen years of age, and go through a four years' training, when, after passing examinations, they enter the Government forestry service. They are in residence from March to November only, so that in the heart of winter Vallombrosa takes on something of its old aspect of solemn peace. The school of forestry is a very well managed institution, and has given excellent results. At present there are only thirty students there, but in past years I remember as many as seventy. The students themselves occupy the airiest corridor in all the abbey, precisely that "dark inclosure" once inhabited by the Florentine youth of rank. Permission to visit the *Istituto* is very readily granted, and it is a somewhat odd mental process to inspect an up-to-date institution housed in an ancient abbey. There is the refectory *tel quel*, pictures, tables, seats, pulpit, just as it was in the days of the monks, while opposite, the *refettorino*, or refectory of the lay brothers, with its inscription over the entrance still standing, *Regnum Dei non est cibus nec potus*, has been turned into a gymnasium, while a picture of the genealogical tree of the Vallombrosan family confronts the students in their fencing exercises. The fine machicolated tower that you see in the sketch (dating from the 13th century) was used as a prison for the

transgressors against the monastic rule, and in the first days of the *Istituto* as a disciplinary prison for the forestry students. It is now entirely disused.

In a small corner of the abbey building dwell three monks. They are placed there by the Government as custodians of the church. One of them, too,* is in charge of the Observatory, whence reports are made every ten days to Rome, and monthly to Florence. Once upon a time the monks were so numerous that the choir would not hold them, and they had to divide into three choirs. The office was thus repeated thrice during the day; so that there was scarcely an hour in which the Divine Praises were not ascending from the Abbey Church. Even at the time of the Napoleonic suppression in 1808, there were some eighty religious. And now but three survive to represent the majesty of that triple choir and the noble traditions of the second greatest abbey of Italy. Vallombrosa, mother house of the Order, is actually without a Novitiate, and no longer has a bed to offer to the once eagerly welcomed traveller! To me it is pathetic—as it certainly is heroic—that these three monks still struggle to keep up office in choir. Beckford, in the phraseology of his day, would call it a "droning" or a "mumbling": we of a more generous age can catch in it the notes of a spirit

* Don Basilio Domenichetti. I desire to call particular attention to his "Guida Storica di Vallombrosa," published in 1903. It is an excellent guide, accurate historically, and up-to-date practically, and moreover has the advantage of being writ in very choice Italian.

chant, faint no doubt, a swan-song perhaps, but while it lasts Vallombrosa is still an abbey.

There is not much now to attract us in either church or abbey. The vandals have been busy here; almost all that ennobled church and abbey has disappeared. It is by no means all the doing of modern hands. Certain Imperial vandals began the work of spoliation and destruction in the sixteenth century, and another species of Imperialist continued it in the early nineteenth. There is still one treasure: the superb reliquary containing the right arm of San Giovanni Gualberto. It bears date the last year of a *fin de siècle* that is very glorious in Italian art, 1500, and *Paulus Solianus aurifex me fecit.* The lover of art should not miss seeing it, and, if that is anything to him, he may here see it in its right place and put to its right uses.

There is a certain feeling of desolation about Vallombrosa. When I first came here the numerous shrines dotted about the forests were all desolate. They are many and full of memories: there is the Chapel of Saint Jerome; the Chapel of the *Faggio Santo*, or Holy Beech, under which Saint John Gualbert lived in solitude seven years; the Chapel of San Torello, a famous Vallombrosan lay-brother, which served as Oratory for women in the days when they were not allowed entrance to the church; the Chapel of the Blessed Migliore, another lay-brother, situated below the rock of the *Paradisino* (beside it is the cave in which the famous hermit died in 1138); the Chapel of the Fountain of Saint

John Gualbert; the little chapel built on the Devil's Rock, or *Massa del Diavolo*, from which a recreant to the religious life threw himself. By the energy of those in charge of the *Istituto Forestale* the mere shells of these shrines and chapels have been restored to seemliness and add to the picturesqueness of the woods: that is but one half of the unity: the images which have disappeared, the rude frescoes which have been defaced, still need to be made good by some generous hand. But we are grateful for the half-loaf that is better than no bread. Owing to the easy access from Florence, the *becero* can come here for a Sunday outing, and like the *becero* of all the world, though he come from the best-mannered city in all the world, he is not above scribbling his unknown name—would that it were writ in water—on the walls of the shrines, and at times even of indicting the vapourings of a fatuous and misguided mind. A sentinel with a blunderbuss alone, I suppose, could prevent desecrations which are the grief of the judicious and the torment of the ecclesiologist.

From the abbey a beautiful walk through the pines leads us up to the *Paradisino*, 3400 feet above the sea. In this magnificent position was once situated the hermitage of the Order: a number of little cells dotted about at irregular distances and enclosed by a wall. Its old name was *Le Celle*. Hence the Blessed Giovanni delle Celle, a fourteenth-century glory of the Order, who, having so far transgressed the rule as to merit eleven months imprisonment in the tower, atoned for his fault by

years of penance in the hermitage. To the Ven. Peter Migliorotti of Poppi (*ob.* 1679) the place seemed so like a foretaste of paradise that he called it the Paradisino, and so it has been called ever since. The cells were pulled down as the eremitical life declined in the Order, and a small monastery, or to use the technical term, which here would have been confusing without explanation, *a* cell, was built in their place. This has now been destroyed and a very charming hotel built on the spot—the Hotel Paradisino—which retains so much of the old character of the place that it chiefly attracts people who like a quiet life. There is nothing "grand" about it except its position. The air here is particularly invigorating; the view magnificent; I can look away over to Incontro, the dour Retreat of Saint Leonard of Port Maurice, and Monte Senario, so closely associated with Servite history; I can see all the domes and towers and spires of Florence, and on some days even the shimmer of the Tyrrhenian Sea. I grieve to say that the old chapel—sole remnant of the monastic institute up here—has been turned into the modern dining-room, so that the place where the elect spirits of the Order were often visited by raptures in saying Mass, now echoes to the clatter of busy knives and forks, and the bright talk and laughter of people who have had a happy morning on the mountain side. It is a pity, since the little monastery had to go, that the chapel did not go along with it. The present circumstances are enough to deprive both the hardy mountaineer

and the dry-as-dust archeologist of hunger and thirst.

I have spoken of the desolation of Vallombrosa, but would not be misunderstood. It is the brightest place imaginable. From having been for centuries a place of the other world, it has now as emphatically become a place of this world, and a very pleasant place, too. Only those plagued with the historic mind could have any qualms on a visit here. In England our abbeys and abbey churches are in ruins: we can sentimentalise about them: our poets have told us how to see them right; and they make such admirable places of picnic. It is difficult to sentimentalise properly about an abbey building still entire and put to up-to-date uses, just as it impossible not to bemoan the absence of those treasures which once ennobled it. And that leads me to say how odd is the good-natured modern readiness to admire things uprooted from the places which gave them half their beauty and all their significance. The modern will go into a museum, and rejoice that by one visit here he may see in cold meaningless isolation priceless objects for the sight of which, in days gone by, he would have had to make a score of adventurous excursions into the by-ways of Tuscany. Here in a museum he can see bells on pedestals which should be ringing out from church spires or palace towers; statues taken from over the town gates of the chief seat of some noble captainry; coats of arms torn from the façade of a Palazzo Pretorio; pictures, painted to glorify a

THE ALPS FROM VERONA

"THE strange sweeping loop formed by the junction of the Alps and Apennines [encloses] . . . the great basin of Lombardy. . . . All the torrents which descend from the southern slope of the High Alps and from the northern slope of the Apennines meet concentrically in the recess or mountain bay which the two ridges enclose; every fragment which thunder breaks out of their battlements, and every grain of dust which the summer rain washes from their pastures is at last laid at rest in the blue sweep of the Lombardic plain."—*Ruskin.*

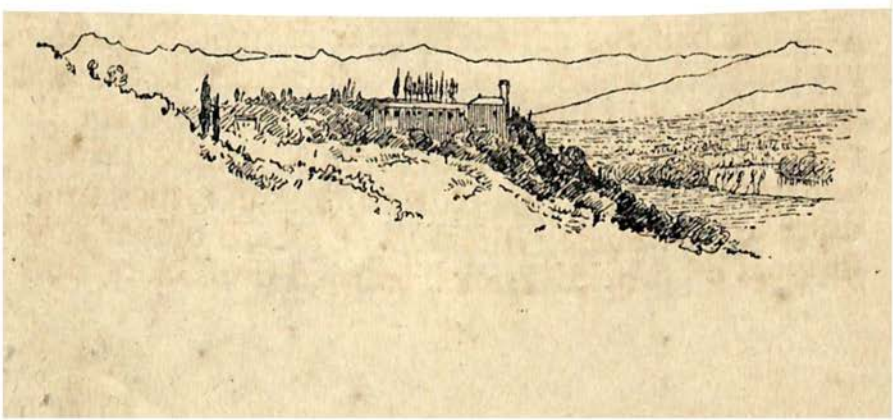
Plate 48

From Verona

church, and shine in a particular light first lovingly studied by some master mind; frescoes, chipped bodily out of the solid walls they were meant to adorn; vestments under glass cases that should be folded in sacristy presses; missals and choir books open at one illuminated page, which should have been turned over and over again during the ecclesiastical year; images of madonnas and saints, symbols to the people of living devotions; sanctuary lamps that proclaimed the Light of the World, and crucifixes meant to proclaim the Redemption of mankind; monstrances for the blessing of the people, and pyxes for the safe carriage of the Holy Viaticum; nay, he may even gaze upon pulpits from which no message of comfort will ever again be delivered to the world, and whole sets of inlaid choir stalls from which the Divine praises will never again ascend to heaven. *Siste viator:* pause and reflect a moment. Is this altogether an unmixed blessing? If all these things have ceased to have meaning, is that any reason why they should be wrested from the places where they once had meaning, where alone the student of the past—who, rest assured, will continue to plague us unto the end of time—can rightly study and understand them? To see the former treasures of Vallombrosa I must pay francs to get into museums, or secure letters of introduction to private houses; I might even have to make journeys through the length and breadth of Europe, or cross the Atlantic for a time of travel in the United States. And what availeth it me if I see a Della Robbia once

in Vallombrosa, and have not first seen Vallombrosa itself? The modern mode of seeing sights is no real education, because it has no regard to the unities that slowly grew under great creating hands in a mighty past. These unities are dead, or dismembered, according to the point of view. What then? The past will remain for ever dead to us unless we at least gather together those unities ontologically, and give them a real existence in the inner sanctuary of the mind. It is precisely the greed of the private collector, and the overweening ambition of national museums, that add to the difficulty of our studies by dismembering that which should have been left whole, and sequestering from active life that which was made for a living use.

But whither am I travelling with these unwonted reflections? Full tilt at a company of well-armed critics, point blank against the dearest of national prejudices. I'll stop and go no further. These reflections were drawn from me by the desolation of Vallombrosa: I hasten to repeat that it is one of the brightest, blithest places in all the length and breadth of radiant Tuscany.



EPILOGUE

My share in this book is the result of hearing and seeing, rather than of reading and study. And just because seeing and hearing can claim a more respectable antiquity than reading and writing, I hope, here and there, to have brought out certain elemental views and matters apt to be overlooked by the scholarly traveller and academical writer, whose house is at home however much his heart may be abroad.

But there is no right seeing in such matters without the eyes of others, and no hearing worth the having that does not proceed from clear, systematic, unflagging interrogatories. And so it happens that by persistently playing the part of the intruding traveller, I have laid upon my shoulders a great debt of obligation to a host of kindly guides and patient interrogatees. I may not give one half the names for fear of offending their modesty; I cannot give the other half because I know them not. They are of all sorts and conditions. Dignitaries of the Church, simple priests and humble Religious, patricians of all ranks, from duke to *nobiluomo;* directors of record offices and keepers of printed books, learned professors, and

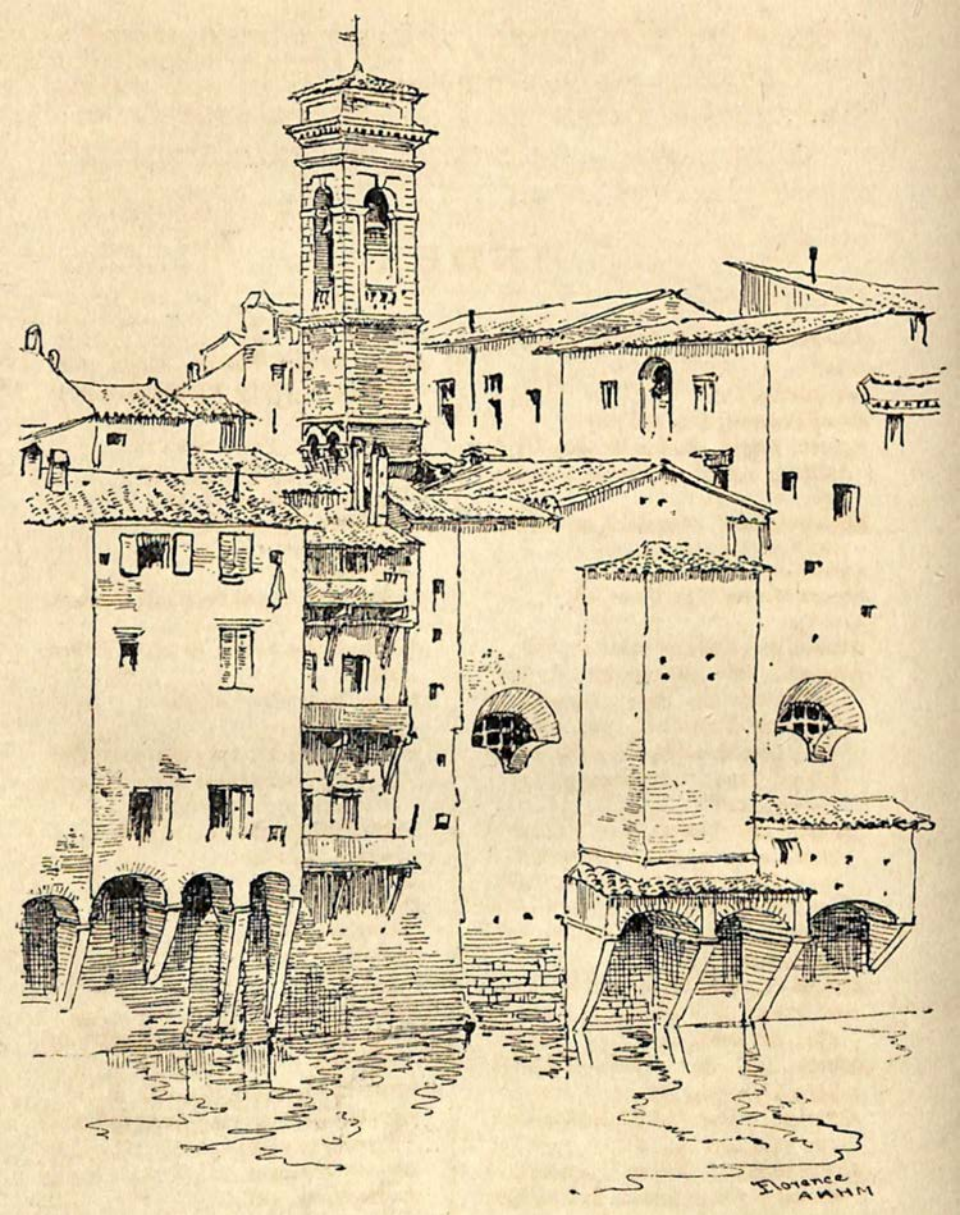
no less learned men of science, syndics of communes, their councillors, their secretaries, officers of the Italian army and navy, officers of the English diplomatic and consular services, active and retired; country gentlemen on the Florentine hills, marble-quarry owners, their foremen, their workmen, traders in olive oil and orris-root, merchants, indeed, of all kinds; then painters, poets, writers, sculptors, architects, engineers; and to come to the humbler but not less noble walks of life, lay-brothers and sacristans, attendants in libraries and museums, stately carabineers, urbane municipal guards, and vigilant custodians of the peace, engine-drivers and stokers, guards of trains and railway porters, waiters at hostelries and eating-houses, fisherfolk, boatmen, cabmen, workmen, *contadini* without end—God bless and prosper them!—and last, but not least, my ever communicative friends, the beggars. All these have contributed to this book, all these have led and indicated, all these have been patient under interrogatory, interruption, intrusion. What then can I say to them all, and how return the attestation of so much love and friending? Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but what so poor a man as Hamlet is may do or say, God willing, shall not lack.

If the benevolent reader is but as lenient as the kindly spirits I have met upon the old road through France to Florence, he will now and again, in spite of halting words and hasty treatment, catch some faint echo of the impressions of

all these my friends; and if he have but one spark of their blithe *bonhomie*—and to me this is most important—he will know how to extend a complaisant indulgence, a sympathetic forbearance, to a rude, inadequate, and much-tried cicerone.

M. C.

LIVORNO, *July* 31*st*, 1904.


Florence
AMMM

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